

CIVIC AND UNCIVIC VALUES

SERBIA *in the*
POST-MILOŠEVIĆ
ERA

Edited by

Ola Listhaug
Sabrina P. Ramet
Dragana Dulić

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Serbia in the Post-Milošević Era

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Ola Listhaug, Sabrina P. Ramet,
and Dragana Dulić



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For our mothers

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Preface

Our purpose in putting together this project has been to bring some clarity to the processes of transition in Serbia since the fall of Milošević. The working hypotheses are that Serbia cannot achieve stability or be integrated into the EU as long as it holds onto traditional, provincial, and nationalist values and that such values do not support a liberal democracy. We hope that this volume will hold strong interest for anyone interested in processes of political change in southeastern Europe or in aspirations to democracy and EU membership in that region.

This volume is the product of a conference held at the International Peace Research Institute in Oslo (PRIO) on 30–31 May 2008, as part of the work of PRIO's Centre for the Study of Civil War. We are grateful to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Norway for a generous grant in support of this conference and to the staff of PRIO, and especially Martha Snodgrass, Andrew Feltham, and Sigurd Ziegler, for their hard work to assure that the conference ran smoothly. In addition to those whose work is included herein, Snježana Milivojević and James Lyon also took part in the conference.

This is the third in a series of volumes devoted to value transformation and democracy in the Yugoslav successor states. Previous volumes were *Democratic Transition in Slovenia: Value Transformation, Education, and Media*, edited by Sabrina P. Ramet and Danica Fink-Hafner (Texas A&M University Press, 2006) and *Democratic Transition in Croatia: Value Transformation, Education, and Media*, edited by Sabrina P. Ramet and Davorika Matic (Texas A&M University Press, 2007). A volume devoted to post-1995 Bosnia-Herzegovina is in preparation.

Ola Listhaug
Sabrina P. Ramet
Dragana Dulić

Part One – Introduction

Serbia's Corrupt Path to the Rule of Law: An Introduction

*Sabrina P. Ramet*¹

This volume focuses on the transformation of values in Serbia since 2000, looking at both civic and uncivic values. Civic values are understood to be values supportive of ethnic tolerance, interconfessional harmony, human equality, tolerance of sexual minorities, and the rule of law. Those subscribing to civic values emphasize common citizenship as the basis for the community—in this case, all *Serbians*, regardless of whether they are ethnically Serb or Hungarian or Albanian or Turk. Uncivic values are understood to be values corrosive of these civic (liberal) principles. Those subscribing to nationalist (uncivic) values look to common ethnicity as the basis for the community—in this case, all *Serbs*, regardless of whether they live in Serbia or in Bosnia-Herzegovina or in Croatia or elsewhere. In Serbia today, civic values are associated, in people's minds, with entry into the European Union and with cooperation in surrendering the two war crimes indictees who, at this writing, remain at large (Ratko Mladić and Goran Hadžić). Uncivic values (nationalism, irredentism, chauvinism) are associated with alliance with Russia rather than with the EU, resistance to the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY), and posturing in protest against Kosovo's independence. The struggle over values takes place in textbooks and the media, in speeches by political leaders and other influential persons, and in the struggle over how to define and understand the actions of war crimes indictees from the War of Yugoslav Succession (1991–95), among other things.

When thinking about political culture and political attitudes in Serbia, one can identify four groups (the first of which itself consists of two clearly definable subgroups), and, for that matter, one can also find considerable diversity within each of these groups. The first group is the *hard liberals*, who subscribe to the aforementioned civic values and, in many cases, also advocate gender equality and tolerance of

sexual minorities. Members of this group were opposed to the war of 1991–95, opposed the intentions of nationalists to annex any portions of Bosnia-Herzegovina (or Croatia, for that matter), and tended, after June 1999, to accept that Kosovo had been lost. Many members of this group took part in anti-Milošević protests, such as those which shook Belgrade in March 1991, June 1992, June 1993 or the winter of 1996–97, for example. Its members include some professors at the University of Belgrade (for example in the faculties of History, Political Science, and Security Studies), students at the Universities of Belgrade and Novi Sad, as well as at other universities in Serbia, and some journalists. Institutions in Serbia working for civic values include the Helsinki Committee for Human Rights, the Committee of Lawyers for Human Rights, Women in Black, the Belgrade Circle, the Anti-trafficking Center, the Civic Initiative, the Belgrade Center for Human Rights, the Independent Society of Journalists of Vojvodina, the Center for Cultural Decontamination, the Initiative of Young People for Human Rights, the Civic Fund of Panonia (Novi Sad), Civic Action (Pančevo), the Green Network of Vojvodina, the Council for the Struggle against Corruption headed by Verica Barać, and the Humanitarian Law Center (*Fond za humanitarno pravo*) founded in 1992. During the war, the independent institution Women in Black bravely defied the Milošević regime with their writings, at public meetings, and in street protests; the successor to Women in Black is the Women's Studies Center, which has recently been publishing books critical of religious fundamentalism. The most important liberal organ is *Republika*, a glossy magazine of social and political analysis and commentary which appears six times a year, although one may also mention the daily newspaper *Borba*, and the online publication *Peščanik.net*. The leading liberal politician in the early post-Milošević period was Zoran Đinđić (1952–2003), who served as Prime Minister from January 2001 until March 2003, when he was gunned down on the streets of Belgrade. Today, the leading liberal politician is Čedomir Jovanović (b. 1971), who served as Deputy Prime Minister in Zoran Živković's government after the assassination of Đinđić. Originally a member of the Democratic Party (DS), headed first by Đinđić and then by Boris Tadić (b. 1958), Jovanović became dissatisfied with the leadership of the DS after Tadić made his views known, and he was expelled from that party in December 2004. In November 2005, Jovanović founded the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), advocating, among other things, acceptance of the reality that Kosovo was lost and acceptance of the

international border between Serbia and Bosnia-Herzegovina. His party attracted 200,000 votes in the most recent parliamentary elections.

The second group consists of *soft liberals* (or flexible realists). The adherents of this group avoid dogmatism, although the politicians in this group (such as Boris Tadić and his DS) may make nationalistic statements in an effort to woo voters not prepared for acceptance, for example, of the loss of Kosovo. The daily newspaper *Danas* and B-92 Radio are associated with this grouping. At this point in time, the highest priority of this group is to bring Serbia into the European Union and, if possible, also NATO, normalizing relations with Western countries. Its members include some of the scholars working at the Institute for Contemporary Serbian History and the supporters of the DS, as well as those members of the Serbian Orthodox clergy whom Klaus Buchenau identifies (in his chapter for this volume) as moderates. The most important moderate nationalist news organ is the daily *Danas*, which enjoys an international reputation for reliability and professionalism. *Blic* may also be characterized as an outlet for moderate nationalist views, alongside *Vreme*, which, at one time, figured as the leading outlet for liberal and anti-nationalist views. *Dnevnik*, as the leading news organ of Vojvodina, is in a category by itself, tending to give priority to issues which concern Vojvodina specifically. The leading moderate nationalist politician today is Boris Tadić, President of the Republic of Serbia since July 2004 and currently serving his second term. For the parliamentary elections in May 2008, Tadić put together a coalition "For a European Serbia," with the support of the Sandžak Democratic Party, the Serbian Renewal Movement (SPO, still led by the romantic nationalist and Chetnik revisionist Vuk Drašković), and the League of Social Democrats of Vojvodina. The Socialist Party of Serbia, now headed by Ivica Dačić, may also be counted among this group.

The "soft" liberals are certainly closer to the liberals, in most regards, than to the ultra-nationalists. As an indication of this, one may recall that the youth movement *Otpor* (Resistance), which bravely opposed the Milošević regime during 1999–2000, enjoyed a brief incarnation as a political party from late 2003 until September 2004, when it merged into Tadić's DS.

The third group consists of *ultra-nationalists*, and its members include some Serbian academics, among them most of the members of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Art; those members of the cler-

gy whom Buchenau calls “anti-Westerners”; the members and supporters of the Serbian Radical Party (SRS), led until September 2008 by Tomislav Nikolić (b. 1952); and the members and supporters of the Democratic Party of Serbia (DSS), led by Vojislav Koštunica (b. 1944). Ultra-nationalists are defined, among other things, by their systematic efforts to represent Serbs, indicted by the ICTY, as Serbian heroes; by their unrelenting desire to annex the Republika Srpska (the Serbian portion of Bosnia-Herzegovina); and by their continued refusal to accept that Kosovo is now an independent republic. In the run-up to the May 2008 elections, leading politicians in these parties argued that Serbia should abandon any ambition to join the European Union, at least given the conditions being imposed by the EU, and rely, instead, upon a close working relationship with Russia. Members of this group also tend to be, at best, unconcerned about gender equality and tolerance for sexual minorities, with the anti-Westerners among the Serbian Orthodox clergy being perhaps particularly vociferous on these points. Political support for the SRS and the DSS is built on nationalist appeals, so that these two political parties have a vested interest in remaining dogmatic and inflexible.

News organs oriented to ultra-nationalist points of view are spread across a broad spectrum. The most influential, enjoying an international readership, are the highly regarded conservative weekly magazine *NIN* (currently being privatized), and the daily newspapers *Večernje novosti*, and *Glas javnosti*, which achieved a certain notoriety by including a large post of indicted war criminal Ratko Mladić in one of its issues in 2006. There is also a gutter press subscribing to ultra-nationalist views, and here one may include *Kurir*—which once published a retouched photo of UN special envoy Marti Ahtisaari adding a Hitler moustache—*Pravda*, and *Tabloid*. The quasi-academic journal *Nova srpska politička misao* is also an outlet for ultra-nationalist views. The daily newspaper *Politika* has also reserved as a vehicle for ultra-nationalist points of view from time to time.

There are various ultra-right NGOs in Serbia today, among them *Obraz* (Honor), a far-right clerico-fascist organization which began as an Association of Students “St. Justin Filozof” together with some Serbian Church officials; by 1993, it had recast itself as a movement associated with the magazine *Obraz*, and in late 2000 it was transformed into a political organization. It seeks to build a society on the foundation of traditional religious values and strong national identity. Other ultra-right NGOs currently operating in Serbia include *Nomokanon*,

Srpski sabor Dveri, *Nacionalni stroj*, *Krv i čast* (Blood and Honor), *Pokret 1389* (The 1389 Movement), *Novi srpski program*, *Naši*, *Mlada Bosna*, *Familija srpskih navijača*, and *Racionalisti*. These organizations have their own websites and have close links with the SRS as well as with some professors. Their constituency includes some students (mostly at secondary schools) and football fans, as well as local citizens of marginal means.

And finally, the fourth group consists of *apoliticals*, who answer “I don’t know” when asked political questions by pollsters and who tend not to vote. They are low on information, tend to hate politics in general, and are dogmatic only on that one point—politics are bad.²

Democracy naturally allows some voters to change their support from one political party to another, depending on what they believe to be the issues and options at the time, or even depending on superficial considerations. That said, it is nonetheless clear that Serbian society today is highly polarized, as it has been for at least two decades; indeed, the political divisions are probably deeper today than they were prior to October 2000.³ This polarization was also seen in the snap parliamentary elections held in May 2008, when Boris Tadić’s pro-EU coalition won 38.8% of the vote against 40.5% of the vote garnered by the ultra-nationalist coalition of Tomislav Nikolić’s SRS and Vojislav Koštunica’s DSS.⁴ But even though the ultra-nationalist coalition had come out slightly ahead, it was Tadić’s DS which was able to form the government, thanks to the support of the Socialist Party of Serbia (SPS), which had won 7.6% of the vote, and other smaller parties.

For Serbia, entry into the European Union would mean that the country would be required to adapt its legislation, procedures, institutions, and standards to the *acquis communautaire* (the body of legislation of the EU), which consists of more than 80,000 pages of legislation and other guidelines. Although joining the EU is no guarantee against back-sliding—as the case of Poland between December 2005 and November 2007 makes clear—nonetheless the EU accession process is designed, among other things, to promote civic values, including the rule of law.

In this respect, however, the political system of Serbia is in a problematic state. Many of today’s problems can be traced back to the Milošević era (1987–2000), when the regime fostered widespread corruption for its own benefit and spawned criminal networks.⁵ During that time, various political parties appeared on the scene, but, in spite of their nominal opposition to the regime, most of them remained

committed to the core nationalist (i.e., uncivic) values of the regime and most of them remained in collusion with key actors in the regime, if not always with Milošević himself. The leaders of some of these “opposition” parties became rich during the War of Yugoslav Succession (1991–1995), as a result of the war economy. The parties themselves were created by units within the regime—whether by the army (as in the case of the now-defunct party once headed by Mira Marković) or the police or some other agency. Thus, these parties could not be said to represent sectors of society, as is the case in West European societies, but rather represent persons already in the political establishment. Moreover, since the leaders of these parties and their closest associates were benefiting from war corruption, the parties themselves became vehicles for corruption. In July 2002, an anti-corruption law was passed in Belgrade; the law put new agencies in place, but did not result in any change in behaviors. Two years later, a law on the financing of political parties was passed, supposedly to clean up corruption in that area; but in 2007, the aforementioned Verica Barać told an online newspaper that there had been no reduction of corruption in the area of party financing.⁶ In 2005, five years after the fall of Milošević from power, a study by Washington’s Heritage Foundation “ranked Serbia near the bottom of its index of economic freedom” and concluded that “Serbia’s power structure remains in the grip of...war criminals, corrupt security chiefs, and ultra-nationalist politicians.”⁷ The heart of the problem, according to Miroslav Prokopijević, an economist at the University of Belgrade, is that the elites who took power after October 2000 realized that they could get rich through corruption.⁸ Corruption scared away foreign investors and contributed to keeping one out of every five Serbs below the poverty line,⁹ and poverty, in turn, has been accounted a fundamental reason for Serbia’s lagging behind “in all aspects of life.”¹⁰ Serbia has also been a transit country for trafficking of cocaine, heroin, and other illegal drugs, with the Sandžak region of Serbia being especially porous for smugglers.¹¹ Today, Serbian political parties control the oil industry of Serbia and Serbian Telekom, amassing profits to finance their activities. According to economist Branko Pavlović, “All institutions in the country are under the control of the political parties and of narrow groups within them [which is to say, outside government channels]...The main source of the party power lies in the quantity of money at their disposal.”¹²

This situation has continued through to today. Thus, we find Barać charging, in July 2006, that “the government is the generator of corrup-

tion in Serbia, whether through the direct involvement of its members in the greatest corruption affairs or insofar as it does nothing to create an institutional framework for a struggle against corruption which could make it possible to resolve these affairs." She added, on that occasion, that "the simulation of a struggle against corruption is perhaps the greatest problem."¹³ Indeed, whereas Serbia was supposed to adopt by the end of 2007 some 25 anti-corruption measures which had been recommended by the Group of States against Corruption (GRECO), as early as July 2007 it had become clear that Serbia had little chance of reaching that goal. The chief problem was lack of will.

According to close observers, virtually every branch of Serbian life is affected by corruption, from the judiciary to the educational sector to the health sector to the political parties to the economic sector to the police. Corruption in the police force¹⁴ and in the judiciary¹⁵ have continued to be a problem and, in spite of the adoption of an anti-corruption plan by the Serbian cabinet in December 2006 and Prime Minister Koštunica's claim, that same month, that "the government's hands are completely clean,"¹⁶ as of June 2008, experts still spoke of "systemic corruption" in Serbia and traced it to the foundations of the state system itself, noting that the judiciary itself remained tainted by corruption.¹⁷ After Transparency International ranked Serbia below Mauritania, Malagasy, Lesotho, Burkina Faso, Ghana, and Botswana in its corruption perception index in 2007, a columnist for *Danas* pondered if Serbia could even be compared with its fellow European countries.¹⁸

The parties which have been the most deeply involved in corruption are also the parties which have been the most eager to fan nationalism. There are several explanations for this. First, during the war years, the promotion of nationalism was crucial for keeping the war fever at a high level, thereby maintaining the conditions which permitted corrupt politicians to steal the property of those unfortunate enough to be in the line of fire.¹⁹ Second, the best way for corrupt parties to avoid real reform, which would mean abandoning their corrupt ways, is to keep people's attention on issues which are not related to their actual well-being. For this purpose, resistance to cooperation with the ICTY, resistance to the independence of Kosovo, and the intermittent indulgence in irredentist fantasies involving the Republika Srpska have all proven highly serviceable. And third, having invested their whole being in Serbian nationalism for close to two decades, any retreat from this position would run the risk of causing any such parties attempting a post-nationalist formula to implode.

There are preconditions for nationalism in the habits and culture of a people.²⁰ But the habits and culture of a people can be molded, manipulated, and fashioned and refashioned to suit the interests of those who write the schoolbooks, who supervise the programming of the media, who give public speeches on the main squares, who deliver sermons from church pulpits, and who, through a combination of pressure and bullying, control the public space. The extent to which uncivic values have found an audience in Serbia is not primarily because of deep historical factors (although these are by no means irrelevant), but above all because of the strategies and tactics of Serbian elites over the past quarter of a century. This book is about the struggle for values in Serbia, and about those sectors where that struggle is being fought.

In the chapter that follows, Dragana Dulić discusses the continuity between old and new forms of Serbian nationalist populism, and cites Latinka Perović's characterization of this phenomenon as a "flight from modernization." She discusses the sharp divide of Serbian society, which reflects qualitatively different and mutually exclusive visions of "national interests," as well as rival ideas about the preferred course of transformation for Serbian society. She also considers the internal fragmentation of the Serbian state, as well as the absence of credible institutions such as academies and universities, or tangible public opinion for that matter, as an acute lack of a system of moral values, resulting in a moral crisis of Serbian society. She concludes that accession to the EU—if and when it takes place—would induct Serbia into a system of civic values which can help Serbs to overcome the dysfunctionality of their system.

Part Two is devoted to political and social values. Ola Listhaug, Kristen Ringdal, and Albert Simkus lead off this section with a chapter examining Serbian civic values in the light of survey data gathered between 1999 and 2004. They find that Serbs tend to be wary of leaders who by-pass the parliament and flout the laws, and have a generally supportive view of democracy; furthermore, Serbs tend to agree with the statement that democracy is better than other forms of government (see Figure 3 in their chapter) but are not particularly satisfied with the way democracy has developed in their country (Figure 4). Serbs are intolerant of gays and lesbians, and—consistently—believe that extremist political parties should be legal (Figure 5). When it comes to attitudes about other ethnic groups, Serbs have the most negative view of Albanians, followed, in order, by Americans, Bosniaks, and Croats—all of them peoples with whom the Serbian state came into conflict

during the years 1991–1999. Of the 12 ethnic groups about whom Serbs were questioned, the most positive orientation was toward Montenegrins. And finally, in an assessment of human development and general satisfaction, Serbs ranked among the least happy people of Europe (with only Estonians, Macedonians, Slovaks, Kosovars, Albanians, and Ukrainians ranking as less happy) and roughly tied for second lowest (just ahead of last-place Turkey) on the human development index.

As already noted, much in Serbia's future will depend on whether it is admitted to the EU and how, in that eventuality, it manages its accession. This is the subject of Stefano Bianchini's chapter, which focuses especial attention on the expectations Serbs have of the EU and the ways in which Serbian values have changed since 2001 as regards economic liberalization, democracy, social policies, nationalism, and tolerance. Yet, Bianchini notes, Serbia is—in cultural terms—not yet a post-conflict society, and this inevitably affects political behavior. This is borne out in the intense bitterness with which many Serbs responded to the long-awaited declaration of independence of Kosovo in February 2008.

Among those institutions which have contributed to the nationalist-populist discourse and anti-modern values, the Orthodox Church occupies a prominent place. But, as Klaus Buchenau observes in his chapter on the Serbian Orthodox Church, one can find both outright anti-Westerners, who preach a set of counter-values rooted in national and religious traditions, and moderates, who accept core Western values in principle but want to modify them. Bishop Nikolaj Velimirović (1881–1956) and Orthodox theologian Justin Popović (1894–1979), who criticized Western individualism and secularism as evil principles, still cast a long shadow over Serbia. During the War of Yugoslav Succession, the anti-Westerners gave their enthusiastic support to Radovan Karadžić (b. 1945), president of the Republika Srpska from 1992 to 1996. During the Milošević era, both the Church and pro-European intellectuals had grievances against the regime, but with the collapse of that regime, the rift between the Church and the pro-Western intellectuals has deepened.

The final chapter in Part Two is Nebojša Petrović's analysis of the social values of Serbian young people. At the time of the 2001 census, young people aged 15 to 29 comprised 20% of Serbia's total population. But Serbian youth have experienced difficulty in establishing their economic independence which has contributed to the phenomenon of forcibly prolonged youth. Strikingly, Serbian politicians have

been more interested in courting retired people than in attracting younger supporters, according to Petrović. Examining what issues are most important, he finds that, in a 2007 opinion poll, employment, material standards, and free education occupy the highest priorities, with the fight against corruption ranked as the fourth most important issue by young people. Social equality was ranked the fifth from the bottom, followed by democracy as the fourth least important issue, and EU admission at third from the bottom, with privatization and support for the restoration of a one-party system occupying the bottom two rungs.

Part Three focuses on media and film, with Izabela Kisić and Slavi-ja Stanojlović examining the behavior and situation of the print media in Serbia after October 2000. They note that the Serbian mass media today are controlled by influential lobbies and new owners who back the ruling class and who publish material which serves to sow confusion among their readers. Kisić and Stanojlović conclude that the media situation in Serbia today is actually worse than it was at the end of the Milošević era. They blame the media in the first place for the rise of the Serbian Radical Party (SRS) and for the radicalization of Serbian society generally. The quality of journalism is also low, with a tendency among journalists to report all sides, without any regard for the sincerity or reliability of the source. The print media have also avoided any serious discussion of Serbian responsibility for the war and role in certain atrocities, and instead have presented the issue of cooperation with the ICTY as a financial necessity, while relativizing the crimes committed in the name of the Serbian people.

The second chapter in this section is Andrew Horton's survey of recent Serbian films and what they tell us about Serbian values. He identifies Boro Drašković's *Vukovar* (1994) as one of the most memorable films focusing on the war. Drašković uses the image of an ethnically mixed marriage (Croat-Serb) to set up a contrast with the destruction of the town, leaving his audience with a sense of tragedy. Better known in the West is Srdjan Dragojević's *Pretty Village, Pretty Flame* (1996), which conveys a sense of moral ambiguity and articulates a non-nationalist narrative. Among the other films Horton discusses is Goran Marković's *The Cordon* (2003), which takes a retrospective glance at the student protests against Milošević in the winter of 1996–97. Marković won the Grand Prize of the Americas at Montreal for this film.

The chapters in Part Four take textbooks and nationalism as their themes. As Dubravka Stojanović notes, Serb historians, and especially the authors of the history textbooks in use in Serbia's schools in the

late 1980s, bear a certain responsibility for the war, by presenting a conflict-oriented account of Serb history and by casting Serbs as the eternal victims of other peoples. The Milošević-era history textbooks remained in use until the 2002/2003 school year, but the new textbooks which replaced them retain the nationalist-mythical framework which had been introduced in the late 1980s. Within this framework, individualist values are interpreted as a kind of betrayal of the nation. The textbooks currently in use in Serbian schools also promote a “cult of death” by glorifying martyrs for the nation. Predictably, these textbooks avoid any criticism of the intolerant nationalism which was fanned by the Milošević regime; they also recast the Chetniks of World War Two—who collaborated extensively with the Germans, the Italians, the Bulgarians, and even on occasion with the Croatian *Ustaše*²¹—as great “anti-fascists” and heroes. Meanwhile, General Milan Nedić, who collaborated with the Axis during World War Two,²² has been recast as a man “well respected” by Serbs, who dedicated himself to protecting the “biological substance of the Serbian people.” Even Dimitrije Ljotić and his Serb Volunteer Corps, who worked together with SS units and the Gestapo, receive a softer treatment than heretofore. In the current Serbian schoolbooks, the Chetniks are portrayed as wanting to take care of the Serbian people, while the communist-led Partisans allegedly had no such concerns.

Ivan Čolović’s approach to the theme of nationalism is quite different. He draws our attention to Hilandar, a monastery at the foot of Mount Athos in Greece, which had great importance in the history of the Serbian Orthodox Church. He recalls a visit by the Belgrade football team “Partizan” to Hilandar in October 2001 and how the athletes were received by the monks. What was the significance of this well publicized visit? Čolović suggests that it would be misguided to believe that the point was to represent the athletes as pious young men; the intention, he argues, was rather to portray the football club as having a strong Serbian national identity. Five years later, then-Prime Minister Koštunica, in the company of two of his cabinet ministers, one of his advisers, and a poet, made their own visit to Hilandar, as part of his campaign in support of a new constitution for Serbia. Coverage of that visit by the daily newspaper *Politika* linked the visit to the constitutional clause affirming that Kosovo was an integral part of Serbia, thereby sacralizing Serbia’s claim to Kosovo.

Part Four is rounded out by Daša Duhaček’s chapter on political responsibility and transitional justice, which she defines as “a poten-

tial attribute of a complex transitional process from any authoritarian/totalitarian system to a democracy.” She argues that Serbia has not yet come to terms with its recent past and that it must do so in order to move forward. She dismisses the notion that the war crimes could be considered merely the responsibility of the Milošević regime and its direct collaborators, and suggests that it makes more sense to view them as a collective crime of the Serbian nation. In this connection, she notes that the nationalist mythology underpins most of the policies undertaken also by the post-Milošević regime and that the bulk of the Serbian population supports those policies. She also argues that the Milošević-era program of Serbian expansionism was supported by “a critical mass of the Serbian citizenry.”

Part Five is devoted to the theme of Kosovo as myth and as politics. My own chapter looks at the myth of Prince Lazar’s martyrdom on the field of battle in Kosovo in 1389 and compares that myth with those which have grown up around Hungary’s King Stephen (c. 975–1038), England’s King Arthur (who lived in the sixth century), and Norway’s King Olav, who lost his life in the Battle of Stiklestad in 1030. I distinguish in that chapter between myths of founding (associated with King Stephen) and myths of martyrdom (associated with Prince Lazar and with King Olav), contrasting them with the rather unique mythology which has grown up around King Arthur, with its themes of chivalry and quest for the Holy Grail. At the time that these myths were launched, their primary purpose was to sacralize and legitimize the specific dynasty involved, and, in the case of the myth of Lazar, where it is said that he chose the heavenly kingdom, an earlier interpretation of Lazar’s choice held that what was meant was that he was choosing security for the Church—a security assured under the Ottomans. In more recent times, however, the myth of “Tsar Lazar” as he has come to be called has been used to justify Serbian claims to an *earthly* kingdom.

This is followed by Maciej Czerwiński’s chapter which examines the linguistic and textual devices used to assert the possessiveness of Serbian semiotic space in Kosovo and Montenegro, noting that linguistic devices are themselves dimensions of ideology and politics. Where Kosovo is concerned, the use of such terms as “Kosovo and Metohija” and “Kosmet”—terms viewed by both Serbs and Albanians as being specifically *Serbian* markers—like the more blatant expression “the southern Serbian province,” convey a clear message that Kosovo belongs to “us” (Serbs) and not to “them” (Albanians). Similarly, appeals “to

defend the sovereignty and integrity of Serbia” presumed, according to Czerwiński, that even after the establishment of an international mandate in Kosovo and the deployment of KFOR and UNMIK, Serbia somehow remained a sovereign and integral state. Or again, references to “the proclamation of the so-called independent republic of Kosovo” betray a fundamental rejection of the notion that the people living in Kosovo might enjoy a right of self-determination.

The role that the theme of Kosovo has played and continues to play in Serbian politics is the focus of the chapter by Hilde Katrine Haug. Reinforcing points made by Stojanović, Čolović, Duhaček, and myself, she argues that Kosovo’s symbolic importance exceeds its geostrategic importance and highlights the way in which the issue serves as an indicator of the limits of value transformation in Serbian society. Reviewing the post-Milošević years, she emphasizes Koštunica’s deeply felt nationalism and anti-Western posture. She shows how, during the first four years after the fall of Milošević, Belgrade’s policy on Kosovo was geared to obstructing negotiations and preventing any movement toward granting self-determination to the people of Kosovo. The violence of 17–18 March 2004 marked a turning point, as she recounts. Thereafter, the international community paid more attention to the province and undertook serious efforts to move toward a negotiated solution. Belgrade’s response, however, was to propose a plan under the slogan “more than autonomy, but less than independence.” Although the plan provided for considerable autonomy in the legislative, executive, and judicial spheres, it remained unattractive to the Albanians of Kosovo, who would settle for nothing less than independence. When the Albanians declared independence in February 2008, Serbia challenged its legality and succeeded in persuading a quorum of the UN General Assembly to refer the question to the International Court of Justice. However, Slovenia, Croatia, Macedonia, and Montenegro—Serbia’s former partners in the Yugoslav federation—had all extended diplomatic recognition to Kosovo by mid-October 2008.

Finally, Steinar Bryn provides a vision of hope, with a chapter in which he recounts his experiences with organizing dialogue between Serbs and Albanians over a period of 13 years. Starting with a dialogue center in Lillehammer, Norway, the Nansen Dialogue Network expanded gradually, establishing centers in 10 different cities in ex-Yugoslavia (Osijek, Banja Luka, Sarajevo, Mostar, Podgorica, Prishtina, Mitrovica, Belgrade, Bujanovac and Skopje). His experience proves that, contrary to some conventional wisdom, Serbs and Albanians are indeed

willing to talk to each other, and “form friendships according to interests in music, sports, culture, outdoors, drinking, and bashing the Norwegian ways.” Steinar Bryn’s chapter and the accomplishments which he and his collaborators have made over the past 13 years stand as a permanent challenge to any who would preach despair and resignation.

Elsewhere, I have defined *crisis* as “a collective consensus that the status quo is untenable.”²³ In this sense, the first and second Yugoslavias—the Kingdom of 1918–1941 and the socialist federation of 1946–1991—were dysfunctional states characterized by a permanent sense of crisis. In the interwar era, the crisis was rooted in a deficit of legitimacy; widespread corruption and paramilitary violence throughout the interwar era; fundamental differences concerning how the common state should be organized; and manifest injustice against the Albanians of Kosovo, against Macedonians, and against other peoples of the Kingdom.²⁴ In the socialist era, the crisis was likewise rooted in a deficit of legitimacy, as well as in the political and economic dysfunctionality of the system.²⁵ Finally, in both the Milošević era and the years since Milošević was removed from power, there continued to be a sense of crisis in Serbia, although there are some signs that Serbia may be emerging from this state of crisis since the swearing in of the government of Mirko Cvetković in July 2008. But, with the Serbian constitution declaring that Kosovo is an integral part of Serbia and with Kosovo having declared its independence in February 2008, there is still fodder for crisis built into this situation. Up to now, this crisis has been rooted also in the criminalization of politics and economics; in the fostering by the political elites of aggressive nationalism fueled by resentment; by the fact that Serbia lost the war of 1991–95; and by the deliberate choice of the cliques around Milošević and Koštunica, who fanned uncivic values and the sense of crisis in order to deflect Serbia from a democratic course and from prioritizing the real needs of the people of Serbia.²⁶ However, Ivica Dačić, the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Interior since July 2008, has sworn to uproot criminality and corruption. If the Serbian government can succeed in this endeavor and also undertake serious educational reform then there is hope that Serbia may be heading on the path toward democratic stability. Finally, this volume makes a small contribution to understanding the Serbian crisis, and the role which values, both civic and uncivic, play in this dynamic, and to suggesting ways in which Serbia can emerge from this crisis and build a civic culture and a stable liberal democracy.

Notes

- ¹ I am deeply grateful to Professor Dragana Dulić for her generous and helpful comments on earlier drafts of this chapter. Needless to say, I am solely responsible for the interpretation offered herein as well as for such errors as there may be. In the time which has elapsed since this chapter was finalised, the daily newspaper *Danas* changed its website from www.danas.co.yu to www.danas.rs. Persons wishing to track down articles from *Danas* cited herein should use the archive function at the paper's current website. This same caution applies to all websites, which are routinely subject to change. I have cited access dates herein, so that readers may see on which date I accessed which website.
- ² For useful reflections on the political polarization in contemporary Serbia, see also Dragana Dulić, "Operationalizing Human Security in Societies in Transition: A Case Study of Serbia," in Wolfgang Benedek, Matthias C. Kettemann, and Markus Möstl (eds.), *Mainstreaming Human Security in Peace Operations and Crisis Management: Problems, Policies, Potential* (London: Routledge, forthcoming in 2010).
- ³ In recent polls, thus, we find that only 7% of Serbs supported Kosovar independence (in November 2007), while 36% hoped at that time for Kosovo's full reintegration into Serbia, that 43% of Serbs supported the transfer of Radovan Karadžić to the ICTY (in a July 2008 poll) against 54% who were opposed, and that fully 70% of Serbs (in a May 2008 poll) think that homosexuality is an illness, with 51% supporting judicial measures to suppress homosexuality. Kosovo, *B-92* (Belgrade), 4 November 2007, at www.b92.net/eng [accessed on 15 July 2008]; Karadžić, *Agence France Presse* (AFP), 25 July, from topic@afp.com, by subscription; and homophobia, *Danas* (Belgrade), 16 May 2008, at www.danas.co.yu/ [accessed on 26 July 2008].
- ⁴ *AFP* (12 May 2008), from topic@afp.com, by subscription.
- ⁵ For details and discussion, see Maja Miljković and Marko Attila Hoare, "Crime and the Economy under Milošević and His Successors," in Sabrina P. Ramet and Vjeran Pavlaković (eds.), *Serbia since 1989: Politics and Society under Milošević and After* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2005), pp. 192–226.
- ⁶ "Intervju Verice Barać o korupciji u Srbiji," *NOVINAR.de*, 1 September 2007, www.novinar.de [accessed on 1 September 2007].
- ⁷ Barry Wood, "Anti-Corruption Fight Moves Slow[ly] in Serbia," *Voice of America News*, 6 August 2005, at www.voanews.com [accessed on 20 January 2007].
- ⁸ *Ibid.*
- ⁹ *Danas*, 23 April 2008, at www.danas.co.yu [accessed on 26 July 2008].
- ¹⁰ *Danas*, 9 May 2008, at www.danas.co.yu [accessed on 30 July 2008].
- ¹¹ *Danas*, 7 March 2007, at www.danas.co.yu [accessed on 9 October 2007].

- ¹² Quoted in *Danas* (17 March 2008), at www.danas.co.yu [accessed on 26 July 2008].
- ¹³ Verica Barac, president of the Council for the Struggle against Corruption, in interview with *srpskainformativnamreza*, 30 July 2006, at www.mail-archive.com/srpskainformativnamreza [accessed on 30 July 2008].
- ¹⁴ Davor Konjikusic, "Corruption, While Declining, Still a Problem for Serbia's Police," in *Southeast European Times* (22 October 2004), at www.setimes.com [accessed on 20 January 2007].
- ¹⁵ Dušan Kosanović, "Corruption Targeted Within Serbian Judiciary," in *Southeast European Times* (25 March 2003), at www.setimes.com [accessed on 20 January 2007].
- ¹⁶ "Kostunica says Serbian mafia is broken," Makfaxonline (Skopje), 29 December 2006, at www.makfax.com.mk [accessed on 10 January 2007].
- ¹⁷ *Danas* (2 June 2008), at www.danas.co.yu [accessed on 26 July 2008].
- ¹⁸ Nikola Samardžić, "U afričkom društvu," in *Danas* (25 September 2007), at www.danas.co.yu [accessed on 25 September 2007].
- ¹⁹ See Paolo Rumiz, *Masken für ein Massaker. Der manipulierte Krieg: Spurensuche auf dem Balkan*, expanded German edition, trans. from Italian by Friederike Hausmann and Gesa Schröder (Munich: Verlag Antje Kunstmann, 2000).
- ²⁰ *Danas* (10 July 2008), at www.danas.co.yu [accessed on 26 July 2008].
- ²¹ Regarding Chetnik collaboration with the Axis forces mentioned, see: Fikreta Jelić-Butič, *Četnici u Hrvatskoj 1941–1945*. (Zagreb: Globus, 1986); Branko Latas (comp.), *Saradnja Četnika Draže Mihailovića sa okupatorima i ustašama (1941–1945): Dokumenti* (Belgrade: Društvo za istinu o antifašističkoj narodnooslobodilačkoj borbi 1941–1945, 1999); Matteo J. Milazzo, *The Chetnik Movement and the Yugoslav Resistance* (Baltimore & London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1975); and *The Collaboration of D. Mihailović's Chetniks with the Enemy Forces of Occupation: 1941–1944* [the English edition of *Tajna i javna saradnja četnika i okupatora*], selected and annotated by Jovan Marjanović, with the collaboration of Mihailo Stanišić (Belgrade: Arhivski pregled, 1976).
- ²² See Milan Borković, *Kontrarevolucija u Srbiji. Kvislinška uprava 1941–1944.*, 2 vols. (Belgrade: Sloboda, 1979).
- ²³ Sabrina P. Ramet, *The Three Yugoslavias: State-Building and Legitimation, 1918–2005* (Washington D.C. and Bloomington, Ind.: Woodrow Wilson Center Press and Indiana University Press, 2006), p. 31.
- ²⁴ For details, see Ferdo Čulinović, *Jugoslavija između dva rata*, 2 vols. (Zagreb: Historijski Institut Jugoslavenske Akademije Znanosti i Umjetnosti u Zagrebu, 1961); Branislav Gligorijević, *Parlament i političke stranke u Jugoslaviji, 1919–1929* (Belgrade: Narodna knjiga, 1979); and Ivo Banac, *The National Question in Yugoslavia: Origins, History, Politics* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1984).
- ²⁵ For details, see Jože Pirjevec, *Il giorno di San Vito: Jugoslavia 1918–1992—Storia di una tragedia* (Torino: Nova Eri, 1993); Svein Mønne-

sland, *Før Jugoslavia og etter*, 5th ed. (Oslo: Sypress Forlag, 2006), chaps. 7–10; and Sabrina P. Ramet, *Serbia, Croatia and Slovenia at Peace and at War: Selected Writings, 1983–2007* (Berlin and Vienna: Lit Verlag, 2008), chap. 1 (“Yugoslavia and the Threat of Internal and External Discontents”).

- ²⁶ See Jack Snyder, *From Voting to Violence: Democratization and Nationalist Conflict* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2000); Ivan Čolović, *The Politics of Symbol in Serbia: Essays in Political Anthropology*, trans. from Serbian by Celia Hawkesworth (London: C. Hurst, 2002); and Norman Cigar, *Vojislav Koštunica and Serbia's Future* (London: Saqi Books with the Bosnian Institute, 2001).

Serbia after Milošević: The Rebirth of a Nation

Dragana Dulić

Serbia belongs to that group of countries once called by German historians an “in-between Europe” (*Zwischeneuropa*). A distinctive feature of this position was the parochialism¹ and marginalization of its political culture for much of the modern history of Europe, primarily in the sense of an uncompleted process of nation-building. Serbian transition to democracy, market economy and national autonomy has been constantly threatened by extremely anti-modern ideological foundations and thus challenging democracy to run cool and avoid intense and sustained conflicts and/or breakdown. Throughout the last two centuries Serbia’s long-standing authoritarian, paternalist tradition and its traditionalist and collectivist political culture² have prevented any radical attempt to come to terms with the basic values of political liberalism, constitutionalism and parliamentarism. Last, but not least, Serbia has never successfully accommodated its institutions within the structures of a well-defined and stable nation-state.

The rebirth of nationalism in Central and Eastern Europe has produced a rich academic literature. It has shifted the focus of recent studies of nationalism and modernization projects back towards the idea of nation and construction of an autonomous state. However, this task is impossible as long as the general Balkan national-revolutionary model, which seeks to establish nationally homogeneous states, remains credible.³ Moreover, it is difficult to see how the European project might be attained, if the values pertaining to health, employment, property value, nature protection, and respect for multiculturalism are not associated with the adoption of newer modes of behavior and new political culture.

The relationship between political values and political behaviors has been investigated since Gabriel Almond and Sydney Verba’s semi-

nal study *The Civic Culture*, (1959, 1963), a book that set the tone of early cultural studies. Political culture was often viewed in what has come to be known as “essentialist” nationalist terms, which left most cultural variability as a distinction between nations. Until the fall of the Berlin Wall, the dominant paradigm of the relevance of public attitudes to democracy assumed that democratic stability was predicated on the existence of a series of deeply held cultural values such as pragmatism, moderation, efficacy, tolerance, and a high degree of interpersonal trust balanced with a healthy skepticism of political leaders. Almond and Verba contended that the institutions and patterns of action in a political system must be congruent with the political culture of the nation. They argued that political culture is a complex phenomenon and that changes to political culture cannot be simply imposed on a particular society from outside.⁴ While the relationship between political culture and political structures is interactive, the survival of “traditional” attitudes even in states where the most intensive political socialization programs were enforced has indicated that there are certain limits to the plasticity of political culture.⁵ Whether political culture is influenced by or influences political behavior and/or institutions is to be examined *ad hoc* on the basis of the idiosyncrasies of the political phenomenon under examination. These findings were criticized either for their static nature and for their stereotyping of entire peoples, while the culture itself became infused with a fixity that clearly over-generalized; or for being problematic due to generalizations based on the empirical data collected via public opinion polls, i.e., opinions of individual respondents on politics, political institutions and basic political values supposedly shared by the majority of population. These values allegedly form the political culture of a state or a nation. However, against this essentialist background, critics pointed out that public opinion on some crucial political issues tends to change rapidly and constantly and besides, there are plenty of political issues about which the public has no clear or prevalent opinion. Moreover, political culture should not be understood as an immutable property that precludes the possibility of political change and favors the preservation of status quo, nor should it be considered as an independent variable in the study of political behavior and institutions.

It should, however, be emphasized that Almond and Verba are right when arguing that the transformation of political institutions, even when complemented by social and economic structures, appears to have been an insufficient condition for forcing change in attitudes and

value orientations. In other words, political culture reveals only the patterns of orientation to political action—a certain set of citizens' orientations toward political objects based on their knowledge, affects, beliefs and opinions, like building blocks rather than any rational blueprint of political action.⁶ Inglehart added that cultural theory implies that culture cannot be changed overnight, though the young are easier to influence; he observed that cross-cultural differences reflect the experience of generations rather than relatively short-run factors.⁷ This is illustrated by “transitional countries” in Europe, where political culture is changing slowly—it has not undergone a profound change in Central or Southeast European countries during last two decades, regardless of the establishment of a new institutional design and intensive activity of external factors (represented, for example, by NATO or the European Union). Among values that show longitudinal durability and resistance to change, those related to the ethnicity, religion and nation are undoubtedly of particular importance. Because of the resistance to profound changes, it can be argued that the creation of the type of political culture that would be close to the ideal “civic” type of political culture—in the sense used by Gabriel Almond and Sydney Verba in *The Civic Culture*—is unrealistic in the region of Central and South-eastern Europe.⁸

Considered at the most general level, modernization represents both an ideology and a discourse. Briefly, my own definition refers to the process of individualization, urbanization, secularization, differentiation (or specialization), rising income level, equalizing of class structure, the spreading of education, and the effectualizing of good governance. The features commonly tested in association with modernization are fundamental transformation of traditional attitudes, habits of mind, patterns and institutions of authority, mechanisms of inclusion, differentiation and status upgrading (i.e., welfare development), and value pluralism, (as well as the rise to so-called post-materialist values in advanced industrial societies). Modernization may also include the sense of social transformation that refers to the basic institutions, which means basic societal inventions, namely, competitive democracy, the market economy, mass consumption, and the welfare state. Modernization brings increasing control of the natural and social environment.

But modernization's scientific and technological achievements are bought at some cost to spiritual and emotional life. In unifying the world, modernization establishes uniform standards, albeit higher ones in many cases than those which had previously prevailed. It is largely

due to this that such a vast historical movement has been bitterly disputed in the last 50 years of the modernization discourse. Many features of modernity, intensified beyond a certain level, produce a reactive response. The assertion of cultural values opposed to modernity is a general characteristic of late industrialism. This may take the form of a revival of ethnicity, a claim for a culture and way of life that often harks back to older communal traditions and which denies the legitimacy of any uniform culture propagated by the large nation-state. In this respect, it is necessary to underline that the modernization discourse takes it for granted that western countries should impose their politics and their rules on developing countries, forcing them to accept western standards and norms, while any disobedience on the part of developing countries brings economic sanctions or even military intervention on the part of developed countries.⁹

There are some basic elements in any theory of the process of modernization which relate to almost all dimensions of social change. The elements of social change pertain to new social movements, new values and patterns of behavior, new institutional structures (together with the organization of states into self-governing republics through democratic means), new patterns of inequality, and the establishment of a contractual basis of rights, which leads to the market mechanism and capitalism. The modernization processes relied on liberal measures, and took the form of a gradual introduction of liberal political principles and institutions, and more accessible education. Modernism is associated with a period of rationality which overturned established traditions, and paved the way for ideas of liberalism to replace superstition and intolerance. The Enlightenment is held to be the source of critical ideas, such as the centrality of freedom, democracy and reason as primary values of society. Modernity is defined in terms of very specific Western societies which are characterized as being individualistic, democratic, tolerant and open, capitalist, scientific, secular and stable. However, we have to bear in mind that the Enlightenment legacy and its western values—individualism, dissent, secularism, reform, and the primacy of critical reflection—have become a contested terrain in our time.¹⁰

Neo-modernization theory, which emerged in the late 1970s, received an enormous boost from the collapse of communist and other dictatorships and from the positive successes of aggressively capitalist market economies in Europe and Asia. Neo-modernism assumes that there are indeed grand and global narratives after all, and that the institutions of

the entire world are converging. Two key factors are looked upon as necessary in the transition to democratic happiness: an emancipatory market that brings liberation through privatization, contracts, monetary inequality and competition; and, secondly, a civic society—an informal, non-state, non-economic political zone, in which citizens compete in the marketplace of ideas, on the basis of a common empirical point of reference that defines the good and the bad.

There is no single universal model of modernity and modernization. The roads to modernity, as Latinka Perović and many others have argued, are not reducible to a single basic design, be it French or British,¹¹ and the Serbian road to modernization was quite comprehensible in its own terms. However, they all share a family likeness in respect to an emancipatory substantive content, which enshrines the enlightenment ideal of the undiluted reign of scientific knowledge and moral self-legislation. In the course of modernity or modernization, Serbian patriarchal legacy has caused in a steady widening of the rift between the universal and the particular, or between West European narratives of modernization and its normative claims (Western as universal) on the one hand, and specific Serbian narratives which want to rely on native discourses (particular) of the development of all societal areas, on the other.

One of the arguments concerning “Serbian exceptionalism” claims that there is a close relationship among several cultural and ideological matrices: national populism,¹² pan-Slavic ideological trends, anti-Westernism, communism, and the weakness of civic democratic traditions in contemporary Serbia. Thus, an existing continuity between old and new forms of Serbian national populism is to be construed as a rationale for Serbia’s post-communist transition and its contemporary “flight from modernization.”¹³ The great part of the analysis was done by Latinka Perović, and it is quite appropriate to apply her conclusions to Serbia’s actual situation. According to Perović’s insightful account,¹⁴ “conservative elites” in opposition to “democratic elites,” are responsible for the absence of vigorous and genuine modernization in Serbian and Yugoslav history. The majority of Serb politicians at a critical stage in the late 19th century were inclined to opt for paternalist legalism of the ruling minority and populism (i.e., National Socialism—*narodnjački socijalizam*) and to turn inward instead of following the path of modernization. Like their peasant constituents, they regarded with intense suspicion those elements of modernity that seemed to upset the patriarchal and agrarian routine of their lives instead of direct-

ing the national project toward the emancipative tendencies of enlightenment and modernity. Thus, modern, Western European notions of human freedom and self-determination, were contrasted with traditional notions of community associated with political, clerical, and intellectual tutelage.

This anti-modernization stance began in the first decades of the nineteenth century and has persisted until an advanced date, here and now. It parallels political formulas expressed by parties of the center and right of the center, and many other political, ideological, and cultural entities. They all openly undermine critical efforts for fundamental reforms (decentralization, liberalization, transparent privatization, regional cooperation, minority issue, etc.), and ultimately better legal and economic foundations for the Serbian state. In this way the historical conflict between traditionalists and modernists has been going on in Serbia for a century and is now resuscitated in contemporary Serbian political theatre. The two opposite and antagonistic conceptions of the “national project” have been transferred from politics to economy, culture, education, and the public space.

Serbia remains stuck in a 19th-century world of nationalism and refuses to recognize the new global realities of economic interdependence, inter-state reciprocity, solidarist cosmopolitanism—all of which characterize today’s EU. The very fact that Serbia has been unable to dissociate itself from its past has been responsible for Serbia’s slow pace in tackling the more visible problems of weak institutions, sluggish economic growth, and the country’s nationalist obsession.

On a platform of ethno-nationalist extremism, Serbs are allegedly being threatened and hated not only by other nations that once formed Yugoslavia, but also by the international community, which has misunderstood the centrifugal process of Yugoslav disintegration and blamed Serbia as solely responsible for the bloody war, as illustrated by the allegedly biased treatment of Serbian indictees at the Hague Tribunal. The dominant feeling of resentment, together with the deep sense of victimization in its political culture, has informed Serbian nationalism, which is strongly characterized by the theme of conspiracy against Serbs. The collective mindset is very close to “the Orientalist attitude” (E. Said), which “shares with magic and with mythology the self-containing, self-reinforcing character of a closed system, in which objects are what they are *because* they are what they are, for once, for all time, for ontological reasons that no empirical material can either dislodge or alter.”¹⁵

Serbia's conservative intellectuals acted as conceptual ideologues, hand in hand with the Serbian Orthodox Church, the political and military elites, and the mass media in undertaking the task of state-building, of redefining the Serbian nation and forming ideas that eventually shaped a new cultural model. Serbia's transition has been more an elite-driven, negotiated project where civil society¹⁶ is seen as threatening national coherence and state interests, and is given little space to voice its concerns. It has never been approached as a meaningful and equal partner by the political elite of any administration since October 2000. Only a small number of organizations have good relationships with the administration or a positive history of collaboration with these institutions—which seriously impedes their capacity to influence the state. An extensive study of civil society in Serbia¹⁷ reveals that civil society in Serbia is still under-valued and, even though it is not suppressed as in the 1990s, it still lacks a recognizable role and its impact on governance processes and on key political and social issues. Despite such an atmosphere, the civil sector—human rights NGOs in the first place—managed to impose human rights as an unavoidable topic.

Apart from civil society's structural weakness,¹⁸ its relationship with the state is problematic, being undermined by the absence of a determinate political will to recognize the role of civil society in the process of democratic transition. Indeed, there are two opposing attitudes on the part of political elites toward NGOs, particularly toward those concerned with human rights and facing the past. On the one hand, there are individuals within state institutions—such as the Ministry of Human and Minority Rights, the ombudsman offices for human and minority rights (at the national and regional levels), and agencies concerned with public information—who courageously support the concept of human rights and figure as major correctives for state institutions' accountability.¹⁹ These actors are pretty much aware that civil society's greatest successes come in the domains where the state is too weak or doing too little: combating corruption, ecology, social assistance, human rights. On the other hand, many NGOs—human rights defenders in particular—continue to be at risk from attacks, threats and verbal assaults from both state and non-state actors (including the media) for their alternative stances on some issues such as the situation in Kosovo or the moral obligation to face the past.

Paradoxically, the coming of democracy in Serbia has actually strengthened the old nomenklatura, enabling its constituents to amass considerable fortunes and to secure democratic mandates for their brand

of political demagoguery and authoritarian populism by cynically fomenting nationalist sentiments. As a corollary of this paradox, indeed seen elsewhere in transitional countries of the Balkans, is that, while many considered that the development of civil society would give autonomy and power to independent institutions and organizations outside the state sphere, in fact against the state, now many of these formerly “independent” centers are themselves embodying the state and the ruling power-base.

Communication between the political elite and the population has been insufficient regarding both societal goals and the logic, strategy, design and direction of reforms. The collective energy needed for mobilization and commitment to reforms has gradually decreased, while apathy and lethargy among the population have been increasing over the years. People feel disenfranchised, marginalized, and alienated by the political class. They are less willing to accept reform because they have had little or no input into the reform process. Perhaps the most exciting evidence comes from the gradual decrease in turnout in several recent elections. A loss in political efficacy is likely to result in lower levels of political participation. The sharp drop-off in participation in the country in respect to substantial legislative drafts has raised new concerns about the vitality of democracy. Without public involvement in the process, democracy lacks both legitimacy and guiding force.

Serbia's high degree of violence in all spheres of public life—from street and family violence, through institutional violence to other forms of brutality—represents an alarming phenomenon. Into the moral vacuum and moral collapse that was endemic in Serbian society, a culture of violence has permeated the social tissue. Negative cultural messages have been received both from the capital and from the inner cities. Middle-sized towns have registered waves of youth violence. According to the Helsinki Committee For Human Rights in Serbia's Annual Report: Serbia 2008, “The year 2008 was marked by violence at all levels—from political, through stadium violence, to school and street violence. This is a reflection of a weak state and, above all, of a blurred strategy for Serbia's future. The discrepancy between citizens' expectations and the political elite's behavior is in full view here.”²⁰

The emergences and/or reemergence of retrograde, deeply conservative ideologies²¹ expressed in many variations of militant, aggressive, homophobic and provocative public performances,²² bear witness to the serious problems of the country. They call into question many transitional efforts and important results of reform, as well as Serbia's

integration into the EU, further complicating the painful democratic, legal, judicial, security, military, and market reforms in the country. Those events contribute to jeopardizing the so-called “Enlightenment project of the modernization of Serbia,” as an overarching political enterprise and a living tradition. The rationalist and legalist spirit of the Enlightenment was in principle a new and important source of nation-state building, but in Serbia after 5 October 2000 it served to halt more vigorous and decisive changes of the state structure.

Even after his death, Milošević continues to divide Serbs into two enemy blocs. Nine years after Milošević’s ouster, Serbia has not achieved a Jpean future. Democrats and populists diverge over how to manage majority-minority relations, safeguard individual rights, and establish a just and enduring political order. The coexistence of these two political blocs within Serbian society generates significant political fault lines, reflective of the incomplete nature of democratic order in the country.

Changes in the Value System

Due to the internal fragmentation of the Serbian state, devolving regulatory activities to a wide variety of public and private bodies and hybrid arrangements, as well as the absence of credible institutions such as academies, universities, and public opinion, there is an acute problem of the lack of a system of moral values. This problem is accompanied by a widespread misunderstanding of the functions and role of a legal state, beset by problems both of efficacy (mainly relating to functional coordination) and legitimacy. Central to the problem of legitimacy is the tension between so-called national interests and universal (or European) values, as defined by the Copenhagen criteria. The twin crises of effectiveness and legitimacy have been alleviated by an increasing recourse to a nationalist mind-set and the nationalist political parties, as well as the lack of acknowledgement of values of general significance, i.e., new values that are widely understood and supported: self-determination, citizenship, inclusion, and empowerment.

This in turn implies that Serbia’s polity has to understand that the European Union is first and foremost a system of values²³ (although a heterogeneous one—conservative and modern, with inherent contradictions of multiculturalism and fundamentalism which cannot be easily resolved, particularly at the point where one seems to exclude the other), and to acknowledge the significance of Europe as a community

of values. The EU derives its legitimacy from the democratic values it projects, the aims it pursues and the powers and instruments it possesses. However, the European project also derives its legitimacy from democratic, transparent and efficient institutions. Suffice it to say that the European Council emphasizes the importance of the common European values of solidarity, justice, and sustainability as the basis for the development of the EU's policies.

Nowadays, in the contemporary European historical setting, when other countries, which experienced marginalization and subjugation by totalitarian regimes, have succeeded in overcoming this unfavorable heritage and try to reshape their identities along the lines of democratic Europe, Serbia is confronting a clash between parochial nationalism and Europeanism. In this respect, democratic progress in Serbia is very fragile, while the restorative forces of Serbdom globally cover the whole spectrum of the public, political, and cultural space. Many problems result from the fact that Serbia has not reached a consensus on a cultural pattern and a moral value system and come to terms with pre-modern legacy—such as provincial mindset, radical populism,²⁴ traditional gender roles,²⁵ clericalization, crumbled, and apathetic public opinion and an implosion of the value system. At the heart of the populist challenge is the fact that the changes hitherto made are so substantial that the basic achievements of pluralism and the free market are not going to be reversed, although the formidable problems remain.

Liberal Serbia has many voices but one that encapsulates the idea of Serbia's failed modernization is given by the Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Serbia which states that Serbia has not reached a consensus on a redefined national program, and as an unfinished state, it is still in search of its place both in the Balkans and in the EU. The conservative elites aim at establishing an ethnic state closely attached to Russia, while suppressing pro-European forces. However, this is in contrast with the fact that most citizens of Serbia clearly demonstrate that they see their future in the EU. The political elites oscillate between neutrality with reliance on Russia and much-expected solidarity and assistance from the EU.²⁶ On the other hand, the liberal elite, civil society, and free media have been marginalized and unable to advance an alternative value matrix, or restore the corrupted cultural and civilizational values, thus creating cultural needs and potentialities for modernized Serbia. This opposition illustrates not only the presence of different models of modernity, but also different combinations of pre-modernity and modernity.

Caught between East and West, Orient and Occident, Serbia is also experiencing a twofold postmodern condition, with the contingent character of its political culture. On the Oriental spectrum, and influenced by the Ottoman tradition, Serbia is immersed in national hubris, self pride, and arrogance, due to the segregation of its historical past. What we are experiencing today is the emergence of a “stereotypical superstructure” of ideological paraphernalia of national icons, signs, insignia, heraldic symbols, liturgical rites, etc. On the Occidental spectrum, the cultural and ideological heritage of the West became obsolete and estranged, without substance, reference, inner content, or core value, only the means of satisfaction (products, images, brands, sign-objects, etc) as Baudrillard succinctly described.²⁷ As Obrad Savić puts it, “In the name of the rediscovered Nation, one flirts with equal vigor with the seductive codes of *Occidentalism*, as well as with the obsessive icons of *Orientalism*.” A strangely segmented Balkan history, in which the Orient and the Occident are crossing and antagonistically intermingling in an unbalanced way, will remain a permanent excuse for a de-regulative polarization of society in Serbia.²⁸

Based upon traditional and conservative lifestyles and value orientations, a great majority of Serbian citizens (40%) belong to the same group called the “Steady, Unchangeable World.” Such a significant presence of their lifestyle is characteristic for Serbia (and, for that matter, also Montenegro) compared to all other countries in Europe, and one of the main reasons for that is the old age of its population.²⁹ Some analysts suggest different causes, such as the missing democratic traditions in Serbia and the prevailing authoritarian value orientations of the majority of citizens,³⁰ which could explain also Milošević’s practically uncontested populist rule in the nineties. Yet, surely there are other reasons too: the strong influence of Serbian Orthodox Church in designing the new Serbian identity—anticommunism, ethnic particularism and philetism;³¹ the low standard of living of the majority of the population; low educational level and modest social mobility;³² great disparities in the level of development of different parts of the country (i.e., eastern Serbia vs. Vojvodina); and last but not least, isolationism because of the ten-year-long regime of sanctions and persistent visa restrictions.

The multi-leveled poverty of vast majority of the population on the one hand, and the sudden increase of wealth of a very small stratum of population on the other hand, both in an extremely short time, have produced a specific value vertical: the dominance of the economics over

other aspects of life inducing spiritual and ethical confusion.³³ This dominance became a major part of life sustenance and commodified definitions of the “good life” that jeopardize the development of cultural diversity and community life, together with respect for and preservation of the fabric and values of “universal” (European) values. Graft and corruption have become an accepted way of life for most of our countrymen, not only for government officials and their relatives. Undoubtedly, moral recovery requires an understanding of values.

Facing The Past

The process of facing the past emerges in the regions of the post-Yugoslav countries at the end of the 1990s, and is to be found in national histories expressing confrontational views of the common past. It actually started from the outside because it is a world trend, not because the world is interested in the outcome of this process in the Western Balkans. The struggle for the interpretation of the recent past has become a new form of Serb nationalism, as much as of Croat or Muslim nationalism, the object being to diminish accountability and to strip victims of their ethnicity. Moreover, in their search for long-term historical explanations, some historians have played down the importance of the events of the immediate past. Metaphorically formulated, these dimensions of the past, i.e., recent and distant, are as much politically formed and manipulated as reflected in the patterns of memory through popular sentiment and public opinion. The process is exemplified in the chaotic ideological transition during the past decade, and by the revision of the anti-Fascist stance but also by the failure to come to terms with the Yugoslav dissolution and Serbia's part in it.

From its core values as a link between transition and justice in the early and mid-1990s, the concept of transitional justice has been enlarged from more narrow questions of jurisprudence to political considerations of developing stable democratic institutions and renewing civil society, depending on the specific nature and context of the country in question. That is why many authors reflecting on transition from autocratic regimes to democratic ones have all integrated the transitional justice framework into an examination of the political processes inherent in democratic change. Consequently, the concept of transitional justice was transformed to assume a broader perspective of comprehensive examination of the society in the transition from a retrospective position to a prospective one with democratic

consolidation as one of the primary objectives. The bottom line of this analysis has been that national strategies to investigate and confront past crimes, can contribute to accountability, end the impunity, reconstruct state-citizen relations, and contribute to creating democratic institutions.

Dealing with the previous regime has proven difficult in many post-communist states, which never undertook lustration or condemned the *ancien régime*. In Serbia, the inherited past has pre-occupied and divided its democratic opposition, but unfortunately it has not produced any positive outcomes. The democratic revolution in Serbia did not remove the *ancien régime* definitively, the consequence of which was, among other things, the assassination of Zoran Đinđić. Because of its “soft” transition, Serbia has permitted the old guard a chance to regroup, and to retain a support base that enabled it to return to power either as reformed (the Serbian Progressive Party and the Socialist Party of Serbia) or unreformed (the Serbian Radical Party). Often this followed strategic policy mistakes committed by the democratic opposition and the opening up of divisions between moderates and radicals.

Ostensibly, facing the past is disturbing and painful, a process of long duration, slow, difficult and of uneven pace. But it was eventually started and this is what really matters. The government set up a Truth and Reconciliation Commission, but it happened that this one has encountered many obstructions from the very start, and eventually ceased to exist without accomplishing its task.³⁴ However, even though the expression “dealing with the past” has entered the public discourse,³⁵ the interest among the population is still insufficient, perhaps because it is too afraid of the assignment of collective guilt. The persistent emphasis on their own victims in order to play down the other side’s tragedy, which dominates the public scene of those involved in war, clouds the truth and the scope of the catastrophe. Like other sides involved in the war of secession, Serbia shared the same discomfort with its own recent past, and has made little effort since 5 October 2000 to open a dialogue with any party about the conflict, although there have been some initiatives with Croatia, together with some expressions of remorse on all sides. The media, state-run, and independent institutions have done little to inform and enlighten the Serbian populace, and are quite reluctant to revisit the past. The mainstream nationalistic-conservative ideological matrix remains in almost all the media.³⁶

Nor has Christian compassion inspired the Orthodox Church to demonstrate a substantial interest in the horrific crimes perpetrated, to examine or account for the way in which nationalist passions fed on religious feeling. Together with the nationalist political elite, the Church is juxtaposing national myths and pluralist realities—although any reexamination of the past is tantamount to the identification of one's moral values, and in the final analysis, an opportunity for Serbia to find a new identity in the 21st century.³⁷ Without the exchange of thoughts or ideas, and without a clearly articulated analysis of narrative self-image, all individual and collective identity constructs will be forced towards their worst possible historical variants. In retrospect, this compensatory mechanism of politics has been disastrous.

Because of all this, post-Milošević Serbia has not overcome the multiple bad legacies of the recent and distant past, together with the challenges of its democratic transition.³⁸ The list of bad legacies is quite impressive: the Kosovo campaign in 1999, the war in Bosnia, major war criminals still on the loose in spite of indictments by the Hague Tribunal, the restoration of the previous political elite which had been the instigator of the war in the nineties, the interlocking nexus of organized crime, war criminals, police and army officers, Kosovo's self-proclaimed independence, the engendered Serbian population in Kosovo, thousands of persons still missing—these are but a few of not only uncomfortable but also dangerous remaining loose ends from the 1990s. These legacies are omnipresent, and Serbia is still firmly in the firm grip of its recent past, indicating that its society and political culture appear to be drifting in the direction of ethnocentrism, nationalism, and parochialism.

Crucial issues highly pertinent to Serbian political development still remain—such as Kosovo's recently declared independence, and cooperation with the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY). Unlike the peaceful secession of Montenegro in 2006,³⁹ the loss of Kosovo represents a damaging blow to Serbia, given its place in collective memory and national consciousness. Kosovo serves as the source of the foundation myth of Serbian statehood and the repository of its cultural and historical lore, which was transferred from the historical to the mythic stage in the re-actualization of reality. It is the spiritual essence of "celestial Serbia," the site of its most important Orthodox churches, and therefore far from being just a piece of territory. Serbian reactions to Kosovo's recently declared statehood have underlined further the divide within the Serbian electorate. If the

population experiences the paroxysm of revolt and relief for a very long time, a twisted and mean-spirited leadership can fall into a nationalist narrative, encouraging radicals to slander the EU as merely the latest in a long line of predatory and unscrupulous foreign powers that have assaulted Serbian identity and pride.⁴⁰ Since there is no way that Serbia will in the foreseeable future accept an imposed settlement, and no political conjuncture could ever be legitimized as long as it renounces territorial sovereignty over Kosovo, Serbian liberal democratic prospects are seriously threatened. Exceptionally worrying is the rise of a new right mindset among young people, whose extreme expressions of ultra-nationalism and extreme intolerance may fall under the categorization which Sabrina Ramet has given.⁴¹ The phenomenon has been in decline compared to the 1990s, but ethnic distance and xenophobia have strengthened in the last few years, especially due to Kosovo's declaration of independence.

As for pressures on the Serbian government to cooperate with the ICTY and to surrender former military, police and political officials to its jurisdiction, they divided the DOS (Democratic Opposition of Serbia) coalition from the very beginning, resulting in Serbia's inadequate co-operation with the Tribunal which has been blocking the country's European integration process for years. The government reports and the entirely positive evaluation of politicians, in particular, are in a great disproportion to the assessment given by human rights observers.⁴² As the former President of Serbia's National Council for Cooperation with the Hague Tribunal, Rasim Ljajić, has noted, most of the war crimes indictees have been delivered to the ICTY, including the arrest, on 21 July 2008, of Radovan Karadžić.⁴³ The two remaining war crimes fugitives are Goran Hadžić and the former General of the Bosnian Serb army Ratko Mladić, who, at this writing, continues to elude arrest.

On top of it, actually dealing with the past does not seem to include issues concerning the performance of domestic institutions at home, that is, issues such as the abuse of the justice system for political purposes—a legacy which truly holds relevance for the reform of the administration of justice in Serbia.

Déjà-vu

Although nationalist populism is a trans-European phenomenon, because of Serbia's paternalist tradition, it represents a far greater threat for Serbia than for other European countries. On the political Right, party

leaders thought that it would be easier to accommodate the far-Right by incorporating them. In some sense it was a valid strategy (there is no party from the far-Right in parliament now), but it came at a terrible price. Most disturbingly, the clear difference between acceptable and non-acceptable forms of rightwing politics, or acceptable and unacceptable political language, was blurred. Radicals display the mentality of political authoritarianism while other parties often feel compelled to compete with their empty rhetoric. The SRS right-wing populist program of law and order accommodates the variety of specific manifestations and represents more an aggregate than an amalgamation of traditional European Fascism, and newer ideas borrowed from modern nationalists such as the Jean-Marie Le Pen and Vladimir Zhirinovskiy. Its populism stands out for its eclecticism and inconsistency (e.g., neo-liberal economy, authoritarian rule and soft dictatorship, xenophobia, and anti-Semitism), and is closer to the right wing than to the left wing (across the ideological spectrum, it is closer to Le Pen than to Hugo Chavez).⁴⁴ The SRS's heterogeneous populism might be defined as a form of political thinking and rhetoric, a set of rhetorical figures and techniques with a single common characteristic: permanent appeal and reference to the collective image of "the people as such." The political messages of the Radicals have become ever more simplistic, short-term, exclusivist, and belligerent. What we have witnessed is an extreme deterioration of political behavior on all sides of the political equation, and this is what is being spoken about on the streets and in civic circles today in Serbia.

By Serbian traditionalists' ethno-nationalist default—combining modernist with anti-modernist sentiments and exploiting popular resentment against the existing social and economic order—Serbia is historically oriented towards Russia. Consequently, much of the public discourse is permeated with anti-Western rhetoric, which constantly contrasts ordinary people with some imaginary elite, and/or "interior enemies" in the guise of "foreign mercenaries in the NGOs" (constructing the opposition between "us" and "them," "patriots" vs. "cosmopolites" according to the circumstances), and is often urged to conquer the hearts and minds of "the people." In that respect they follow the same matrix as the logic of all populist appeals, that of the existence of an insurmountable gap between "the corrupt, nationally alienated elite" and "the people as such." Anti-elitist rhetoric is used not only to win quick popular support, but to oppose the representative nature of modern democracies, the protection of the rights of minori-

ties, and constraints to the sovereignty of the people—all requirements of EU alignment. Instead, they offer populist majoritarianism at the expense of multiculturalism and minority rights.

The populist, anti-reform messages and the right wing's ethno-nationalism as a political ideology inform a considerable part of the population and the present opposition to DS-coalition government. The political strategy of the right wing is to cushion domestic dissatisfaction and play the role of ultra-nationalist threat for the Serbian democratic forces in their orientation towards the EU. Thus, both old and reformed radicals have continuously manifested either an outright opposition or opportunistic reluctance toward European integration⁴⁵ (allegedly because of the Kosovo issue, but beneath the surface there were other issues such as collaboration with the ICTY, and the OSCE, NATO, Partnership for Peace, Security Sector Reform and the like).

An arrogant denial of Western culture's liberal achievements is built into the intellectual habitus of Serbian traditionalists. Moreover, this phenomenon is deeply rooted in Serbian politics and culture, ranging from "agrarian populism" to "political populism,"⁴⁶ whose actual manifestations often reveal the presence both of classical left-wing and right-wing theses, yet united under the standard narrative of "us" vs. "them."⁴⁷ A political opponent is an enemy whom you must destroy, instead of an adversary with whom you might find common interests. These traits are not peculiar to Serbian populism, insofar as they exhibit common features of anti-liberal reaction. Because of their disrespect for parliamentary rules and values, and when the institutional system became unresponsive to popular aspirations and needs, the Radicals turned the street into a political institution, in a manner of "direct democracy." One of their tactics is the obstruction of parliamentary sessions by endless procedural complaints, arguably unaware that the parliamentary process is empirically the best antidote to populism. Often, they have given their support to the ultranationalist, extra-parliamentary right for their claims for "a restoration of the moral order," and occasionally for their racist motives, perennial anti-Semitism, hatred of Roma, and abuse of homosexuals. The populist discourse and rhetoric of the SRS, SNS,⁴⁸ and DSS, together with several minor political parties of the rightist orientation, is very consciously designed. With it, these parties attempt to reach increasingly broad sections of the electorate on highly sensitive points and constantly stoke political excitement in order to be able to employ it in the power interests of the party.

Currently, the Serbian economy is in a deep recession, partly due to the general financial crisis but also due to accumulated domestic problems such as poor availability of the latest technologies, inadequate firm-level technology absorption, the brain drain, weak competitiveness, irregular financing of enterprises, insufficient investing, creeping inflation, etc. According to *the Global Competitiveness Report 2009–2010*, issued by World Economic Forum, Serbia ranks 93rd among 133 countries, with only Albania and Bosnia-Herzegovina, among Western Balkan states, lagging behind Serbia.⁴⁹ This means that Serbia has fallen eight places in comparison to its previous ranking in 2008, with a weakening in its financial markets and macroeconomic stability. The key indicators of competitiveness—such as institutions, infrastructure, macroeconomic stability, etc.—are extremely unfavorable. Unemployment and the large deficit remain ongoing political and economic problems. Actually, only 15% of the Serbian economy is functioning. Deep-seated grievances are primarily based on poverty which is caused by a low level of the national per capita income, derived from the insufficient participation and insufficient social inclusion of the population in the labor market in the sphere of social services, including education, health or utilities. An accumulation of poverty and neglect are leading to a profound sense of humiliation, xenophobia, and opposition to Western foreign policy, which have frequently reinforced, or have been seen to reinforce, local inequities and social injustice.⁵⁰ The group most hit by economic restructuring is the traditional working class employed in the productive sector through large-scale state owned companies and public enterprises, leading to its further atomization and fragmentation.

Since there has not been any organized political force left of the centre to give voice to the losers in the transition, old and reformed, “hard” and “soft” (“moderate”) radicals exploit this vacuum. It is they who will remain the source of the chaotic energy of populist expectations, which alone are capable of propelling someone to the political throne. It is more difficult to explain why radicals and extreme right organizations were the sole available alternative, and why the post-communist Left failed to respond adequately to the social chaos in transitional states. For that matter, as long as the transition is happening, the Radical option will continue to command a considerable share in the Serbian electorate, and will continue to call into question the future of Serbia’s great European project. However, the causes of Rad-

ical revival are far deeper, originating in the political history of Serbia in the nineteenth century.

The Serbian Orthodox Church took an active part in designing the new, desirable collective identity of the Serbian people against the matrices of other cultures, and religions, and in the spirit of traditionalism, autarchy, and de-secularization. The trend of redefining national identity in terms of Orthodox identity, and in particular, in terms of anticommunism and philetism, is a distinctive trait of the ideological confusion which accompanies the Serbian process of transition.

The political assassination of Zoran Đinđić was meant to demonstrate that the reform process might be aborted at any time and that a coup d'état might be imminent at any point, if it served the interests of the ruling political and corporate elite. His brutal murder proves in fact that Serbia was not ripe for a modern political and cultural model. Since then, Serbia has produced a series of failures in democratization, liberalization of economy and international integration, and yet all these have not produced lessons learned, let alone a change of the political regime. Viewed from this perspective, all those who think that, on the Serbian political stage, there are powerful political forces, which are simply against transition, whose belief system does not value a free market economy, the rule of law and stable democracy, are certainly right.

It must be said that we should not underestimate the real danger which Serbia faces in the context of its sharp political polarization—almost an “unbridgeable” gap between “us” and “them,” “natives and strangers,” “modernists” and “traditionalists,” “liberals and conservatives” (all of them further subdivided into public and private spheres, and parallel institutional and non-institutional actions). The new pro-European government with Mirko Cvetković as Prime Minister has already shown its low potential to cope with serious economic problems, and to undertake substantial economic reforms. Creeping poverty, a weak state and social discontent may well work for the benefit of the reformed Radicals, who at present represent a serious threat to the pro-European government, at least for the next elections. Bearing in mind that Nikolić's moderate Radicals are selling old wine in new bottles, there is a reasonable doubt that this will further move the Serbian electorate toward center-right. The probability of some future ideological and political alliance of the right wing political parties (SRS, SNS, DSS, NS, JS, SNS, etc.)⁵¹ should not be excluded: it is not a hypothetical, but rather a real possibility, as long as Serbia remains split into

two antagonistic political options, between the “pro-EU or pro-reform” and “national” Serbia. In that case, in the hypothetical event of the formation of a government by the “patriotic coalition,” and eventually the rule of the retrograde forces for another few years, democratic forces in Serbia could be on the defensive to halt the restoration of the ancient régime and further radicalization in the country. By all means this would be a real regression of the Serbian society for the next decade, if not longer. Therefore, in our lifetimes we might continue to witness extreme swings of the historical pendulum—between modernism and re-traditionalism, progress and regression, so typical of the Serbian political and cultural repository.

For Serbia, emerging from two decades of isolation and several decades of totalitarianism, finding its place in the contemporary world has been exceptionally challenging, as it has been confronted with an important crossroads in its future trajectory. Yet in spite of the government’s pronouncements, its path towards a broader European future may be too complex and rocky. Nine years after the democratic changes, Serbia is still struggling with the political heritage of the 1990s, while political struggles together with continued political instability threaten reform. The most critical issue is the completion of institution-building, so that every institution can perform its proper function and be accountable for it, thus enabling the internal ordering of the state. A crucial decision as such is to be made against a most unfavorable domestic background with its current balance of power and mediocre reform potential.

Serbia has to open all windows upon the European common values and critically engage with its proper contribution to “Europe as a community of destiny,”⁵² which is particularly important precisely now that cultural and religious differences in Europe are becoming more and more pronounced. But its successful integration into EU implies as much self-understanding and self-reflection, as an understanding that does not define integration as a mere technical process. The conceptualization of political culture leading to this objective should be guided, effectuated and promoted by Serbian liberal intelligentsia, as it has always been the case throughout its modern history. Nothing less and nothing more.

Notes

- ¹ In their famous book *The Civic Culture*, Gabriel A. Almond and Sydney Verba described the political culture of the Ottoman Empire as “parochial.” Typical for the “parochial political culture” were systemic and insecure or negative feelings towards the central authorities, with no innate criteria for balancing the relations with them. Gabriel A. Almond and Sydney Verba, *The Civic Culture: Political Attitudes and Democracy in Five Nations* (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1963), pp. 23–24. See also fn 8.
- ² Nebojša Popov, “Srpski populizam. Od marginalne do dominantne pojave,” in *Vreme* (Belgrade), no. 35 (24 May 1993); Latinka Perović, *Srpsko-ruske revolucionarne veze* (Beograd: Službeni list SRJ, 1993); Popov, *Srpski socijalisti 19 veka. Prilog istoriji socijalističke misli* (Beograd: Službeni list SRJ, 1995); Andrei L. Shemiakin, *Ideologija Nikoly Pashicha: Formirovanie i evolutsiia 1868–1891* (Moscow: Indrik, 1998); and Latinka Perović, “The Flight from Modernization,” in Nebojša Popov (ed.), *The Road to War in Serbia: Trauma and Catharsis* (Budapest–New York: Central European University Press, 2000).
- ³ Marija Todorova, *Imaginary Balkan*, trans. by Marija Starcevic i Aleksandra Bajazetov-Vucen, 2nd ed. (Beograd : Biblioteka XX vek Krug, 2006).
- ⁴ Although, this was done in post-war Germany, when the entire political culture was remade in both the western occupation zones/West Germany and the Soviet occupation zone/GDR.
- ⁵ Gabriel A. Almond, “The Intellectual History of the Civic Culture Concept” in Gabriel A. Almond and Sidney Verba (eds.), *The Civic Culture Revisited* (Newbury Park, Calif.: Sage Publications, 1980), pp. 31–32.
- ⁶ See Rod Hague and Martin Harrop, *Comparative Government and Politics: An Introduction* (Basingstoke: Palgrave-Macmillan, 2001), p. 78.
- ⁷ Ronald Inglehart, *Culture Shift in Advanced Industrial Society* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1990), p. 19.
- ⁸ According to Almond and Verba’s typology, there are three basic or “ideal” types of political culture parochial, subject and participant. A “parochial” political culture is associated with groups that have no knowledge of how the political system works, no affective orientations towards it, and no desire or capability of participating in it. Also, there are no specialized political roles in societies, and for members of these societies political orientations to these roles are not separated from their religious and social orientations. A “subject” political culture is one in which individuals have an affective orientation towards the political system or some knowledge of how its policies are enforced, but little awareness of how its policies are made and no desire or capability of participating in it. It is essentially a passive system as far as a government influence is concerned. In a “participant” type of political culture, citizens are informed, make normative judgments, act on their beliefs, and tend to be explicitly oriented to the system as a whole. Almond and Verba’s “civic” culture is a type of political cul-

ture that is the most favorable for democracy; it is based on the congruency of political culture with political structure.

- ⁹ W. Schelkle, et al., *Paradigms of Social Change: Modernization, Development, Transformation, Evolution* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000), p. 231. See also Y. So Alvin, *Social Change and Development. Modernization, Dependency, and World System Theories* (Newbury Park, Calif.: Sage, 1990).
- ¹⁰ Cf. Stephen Eric Bronner, "Critical Intellectuals, Politics, and Society" in *Imagining the Possible: Radical Politics for Conservative Times* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 73ff.
- ¹¹ Cf. Latinka Perović, *People, Events, and Books*, 2nd ed. (Belgrade Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Serbia, 2000); Latinka Perović, "The Flight from Modernization," in Popov, (ed.), *The Road to War in Serbia*, pp. 109–123; see also *Srbija u modernizacijskim procesima XX veka* (Beograd: Institut za noviju istoriju Srbije, 1994); Olga Popović Obradović, *Parlamentarizam u Srbiji od 1903 do 1914 godine* (Belgrade: Službeni list SRJ, 1998); and Dubravka Stojanović, *Politička kultura i modernizacija u Srbiji početkom 20. veka, Dijalog Povijesničara-Istoričara, Pecs, maj 2000*, (Zagreb: Friedrich Naumann Stiftung 2001), pp. 158–167.
- ¹² In the course of the survey of definition of populism it is relevant to bear in mind a difference between Western and East-European conceptions of it. As Cas Mudde has pointed out, "While in Western Europe, the word populism is generally used to denote postmodern or "more moderate" types of "Extreme Right" or "Radical Right" parties, in Eastern (and Central) Europe it is considered to be a more general phenomenon, spread across the ideological spectrum." See Cass Mudde, "In the name of the Peasantry, the Proletarian, and the People: Populism in Eastern Europe"; and Yves Meny and Yves Surel (eds.) *Democracies and the Populist Challenge* (Houndmills: Palgrave, 2002), p. 214.
- ¹³ Perović, "The Flight from Modernization," pp. 110–112.
- ¹⁴ Cf. Christian A. Nielsen, Interview with Latinka Perović, at *Balkan Witness*, <http://www.glypx.com/balkanwitness/perovic.htm> [accessed on May 29, 2010].
- ¹⁵ Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1978; reprinted, 1994), p. 70.
- ¹⁶ We have in this sector NGOs, trade unions, professional associations, chambers of commerce, student groups, cultural societies, sports clubs and informal community groups, even religious associations.
- ¹⁷ Zdenka Milivojević, *Civil Society in Serbia: Suppressed During the 1990s—Gaining Legitimacy and Recognition after 2000. Civicus Civil Society Index Report for Serbia* (Belgrade: Research & Analytical Center ARGUMENT in collaboration with The Center for the Development of the Non-profit Sector (CDNPS) 2006, Executive Summary, pp. 14–22. at http://www.crnps.org.rs/xdoc/arhivavesti/civicus/civicus_en2007.pdf [accessed on May 29, 2010].

- ¹⁸ The analysis of civil society structure revealed that it represents its weakest trait. Milivojevic, *Civil Society in Serbia*, p. 16.
- ¹⁹ This segment of the state administration cooperates with the non-governmental sector: in this context the Ministry for Human and Minority Rights signed a Memorandum on Understanding with over 100 NGOs in early 2009.
- ²⁰ Human Rights, Democracy and Violence, *Annual Report: Serbia 2009*, Helsinki Committee For Human Rights in Serbia Belgrade, 2009, pp.18-19.
- ²¹ Serbian society today can be characterized as deeply conservative. As seen in a recent Helsinki Committee report on nationalism, only now are social and cultural tendencies that were suppressed under communism and Milošević emerging fully. The most noticeable is the strengthening of the Serbian Orthodox Church and the rise of clerico-nationalism. Cf. Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Serbia, *The Serbian Orthodox Church and the New Serbian Identity*, Belgrade, 2006. The study is a part of a larger project "Religion and Society," realized with the assistance of the Heinrich Böll Foundation.
- ²² Particularly worrying is the rapid growth—under the patronage and/or salient support of prominent national bodies, university professors, theologians, high dignity of The Serbian Orthodox Church, of radical right-wing nationalist and pro-fascist associations among the youth, including the emergence of several student organizations and movements (like "St. Justin," "Otačestveni pokret Obraz," "Nomokanon," "Srpski sabor Dveri," "Krv i čast," "Serbian Right Wing Forum," "National Formation," "National Front" association, etc.). Significantly, the number of ethnically motivated incidents in Vojvodina has been on the rise, and various forms of physical assaults on the members of minority communities have significantly decreased while, on the other hand, numerous provocations, insults and graffiti on houses and religious sites have been recorded, some of them even calling for a lynching.
- ²³ According to the "Charter of European Identity" adopted by the Congress of the European Union in 1995: "... fundamental European values are based on tolerance, humanity and fraternity. Building on its historical roots in classical antiquity and Christianity, Europe further developed these values during the course of the Renaissance, the Humanist movement, and the Enlightenment, which led in turn to the development of democracy, the recognition of fundamental and human rights, and the rule of law" See at http://www.europa-web.de/europa/02wwswww/203chart/chart_gb.htm [last accessed on 10 April 2008].
- ²⁴ For the analysis of populism, see F. Stephen Larrabee, "Danger and Opportunity in Eastern Europe," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 85, No. 6 (November/December 2006), pp. 117–131; Marian L. Tupy, *The Rise of Populist Parties in Central Europe: Big Government, Corruption, and the Threat to Liberalism* (Washington: CATO Institute, 8 November 2006); and

- Jacques Rupnik, *Populism in East-Central Europe* (Vienna: Institute for Human Sciences, No. 94; Fall 2006).
- ²⁵ Sabrina P. Ramet, "The Sirens and the Guslar: An Afterword," in Sabrina P. Ramet and Vjeran Pavlaković (eds.), *Serbia Since 1989: Politics and Society Under Milošević and After* (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 2005), p.405.
- ²⁶ Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Serbia. *Annual report: SERBIA 2008: Human Rights, Democracy and Violence*, p. 38, at <http://www.helsinki.org.rs/doc/Report2008.pdf> [accessed on 24 May 2010]; and, *Human Security in an Unfinished State—Serbia, 2005*, p. 7, 10 and 230–231, at <http://www.helsinki.org.rs/doc/Report2005.pdf> [accessed on 24 May 2010].
- ²⁷ Jean Baudrillard, "The Virtual Illusion: Or the Automatic Writing of the World," and Roy Boyne and Scott Lash (Interview), Chris Turner (translator), "Symbolic Exchange: Taking Theory Seriously: An Interview with Jean Baudrillard," *Theory, Culture and Society*, Vol. 12, No. 4 (November 1995), pp. 79–95; 97–107.; and Jean Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulations* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1994), pp. 82–83.
- ²⁸ Obrad Savić, "Final Address: Jean Baudrillard, Serbia," *Eurozine*, published 28 February, 2002. See also V. P. Gagnon, *The Myth of Ethnic War: Serbia and Croatia in the 1990s* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2004).
- ²⁹ This is just one of numerous findings obtained from a survey recently conducted by the GfK Group on the issue—consumers in the countries of Western and Central & Eastern Europe, 2005.
- ³⁰ Golubović Zagorka, Bora Kuzmanović and Mirjana Vasović, *Društveni karakter i društvene promene u svetlu nacionalnih sukoba* (Beograd: Filip Visnjić, 1995).
- ³¹ *The Serbian Orthodox Church and the New Serbian Identity*, Belgrade, 2006, <http://www.helsinki.org.rs/doc/Studija-Kupres-eng.pdf> [accessed on 24 May 2010].
- ³² Only 5.5% of the Serbian population has a university degree or higher education diploma.
- ³³ In 2006, 8.8% of the Serbian population was classified as poor, since their consumption per consumer unit was on average below the poverty line. In 2008, 6.6% of the population (500 000) belong to this category. The Poverty Reduction Strategy was adopted by the Government of Serbia on 16 October 2003, and it is aligned with the efforts of the Government of Serbia in relation to the European Integration process (<http://www.seio.gov.rs/code/navigate.asp?Id=2>) and the realization of UN-set Millennium Development Goals (<http://www.undp.org.rs/?event=public.mdgTargets>). The highest percentage of the poor was found in households whose primary wage earner was inactive (students, housewives, etc.), yet is not a pensioner, then, among the citizens with a low level of education, elderly persons, children up to the age of 18, households with six or more household members, and generally, the population in Central Serbia.

- ³⁴ See Tatjana Perić, “For Truth and Reconciliation: The Contribution of Religious Communities in Post-Milošević Serbia,” paper presented at the conference on “Rights, Religion, and Societal Reconstruction,” organized by the Center for the Study of Human Rights at Columbia University, Bellagio, Italy, July 2002.
- ³⁵ “Dealing with the past” entails an entire range of action, like: reforms of state institutions, primarily judiciary; lustration; sanctioning perpetrators of the crimes, the ones responsible, particularly the ones who gave orders (familiar discussions on command responsibility); hearing the accounts of victims at community and society level; importance of independent investigative journalism; reparation/compensation to the victims; documenting of events; reconciliation/trust among the divided communities.
- ³⁶ See “Regulation of the Media Sphere Resisted,” *Helsinki Bulletin*, No 37, September 2009, p.2; and Sonja Biserko, “Can the Balkans (Ever) Be Reconciled? Challenges, Approaches, Projects, New Designs,” Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Serbia, Belgrade, 17 March 2003.
- ³⁷ Peter Ford, “Serbs Still Ignore Role in Atrocity,” *Christian Science Monitor*, Feb 11, 2002, at <http://www.csmonitor.com/2002/0211/p01s02-woeu.html> [accessed on 24 May 2010].
- ³⁸ Already in 2005 President Tadić complained that “Everything that had burdened Serbia under the rule of Slobodan Milošević is back again,” See “Tadić Criticizes Serbia’s Ideals,” *AP* (6 October 2005), at http://www.ocregister.com/ocregister/news/atoz/article_703148.php [accessed on May 29, 2010].
- ³⁹ Montenegro, the only constituent of the former Yugoslav republic that kept official ties with Serbia via State Union, decided by the referendum on May 21 2006 to declare independence on June 3 2006. Eventually, on 28 June 2006, it became the 192nd member state of the United Nations.
- ⁴⁰ It is important to bear in mind that Kosovo is a protectorate since 1999. NATO has provided the backbone of security in Kosovo with its 17,000-strong KFOR force. The EU has a small but increasingly important presence in the region. Aside from the Kosovo mission, the 27-member bloc has 2,500 troops stationed in Bosnia, which would be severely tested if tensions from Kosovo spill across its borders. The EU sent a police mission to Kosovo in contravention of international law amid heightened tension on the Kosovo-Serbia border. The EU has deployed a 2,000-strong police contingent, “peace and justice” force (EULEX), plus 1,000 British troops, from June 2008, to oversee training and institution-building, with limited rights to intervene to fight organized crime and corruption or hunt war criminals. These are on top of the 15,000 NATO troops permanently stationed in Kosovo.
- ⁴¹ Ramet, “The Sirens and the Guslar,” pp. 396–400, 407.
- ⁴² The Amnesty International Submission to the UN Universal Periodic Review. Third session of the UPR Working Group, December 2008, p.3, at <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/asset/EUR70/006/2008/en/3b1c01b7->

6e21-11dd-8e5e-43ea85d15a69/eur700062008eng.pdf [accessed on 24 May 2010]; see also *Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Serbia. Annual report: Serbia 2008*. Human rights, democracy and—violence, p. 41, at <http://www.helsinki.org.yu/doc/Report2008.pdf> [accessed on 24 May 2010].

⁴³ However, for all the criticism Belgrade has received for its failure to turn over Ratko Mladić, for instance, the fact remains that Belgrade has turned over two former presidents, a former prime minister, and several top generals and security officials. In sum, as of October 2007, for instance, 42 out of 46 individuals indicted by the Hague Tribunal (91%) have been extradited, and 98% of the documents requested by the ICTY have been turned over. Cf. Figures according to Rasim Ljajić, President of Serbia's National Council for Cooperation with the Hague Tribunal. See "Ljajić: 90 posto zahteva ispunjeno," 26 October 2007, available at <http://www.b92.net> [accessed on 24 May 2010].

⁴⁴ See Michael Kazin, *The Populist Persuasion: An American History*, (New York: Basic Books, 1995).

⁴⁵ Nikolić, whose former party's leader, Vojislav Šešelj was a spokesman of the Milošević war policy and who is currently being tried for war crimes in The Hague, has been for years strongly opposed to Serbia forging closer ties with the EU. Meanwhile, as the leader of the new party—SPP, he has no longer a negative stance on the EU and Serbian integration to it.

⁴⁶ Margaret Canovan describes populism in modern democracies as "an appeal to the "people" against both the established structure of power and the dominant ideas and values of the society." Margaret Canovan, "Trust the People! Populism and the Two Faces of Democracy," in *Political Studies*, Vol. 47, No. 1 (March 1999), p. 5; See also Margaret Canovan, *Populism* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1981), pp. 13, 128–138.

⁴⁷ Viewed from Schmitt's perspective, populism can be seen as the most intensive form of the political, as the triumphant return of political passion in a public sphere paralyzed by political correctness, as a long-expected revenge of politics against its wretched and insidious substitutes and limitations. Behind the shallow and vulgar rhetoric of populists we must see a fundamental contradiction that gives rise to a deep undercurrent with unsuspected force: the elementary opposition between "Us" and "Them." Cf. Paul F. Piccone, "Postmodern Populism," *Telos*, Vol. 2, No. 2 (1995), pp. 45–87; Barrie Axford and Gary Browning (eds.), *Modernity, Post-modernity: From the Personal to the Global* (Oxford: Oxford Brookes University, 1996), pp. 169–196.

⁴⁸ *Srpska napredna stranka* or Serbian Progressive Party (SNS) is a splinter from the Serbian Radical Party led by Tomislav Nikolić, and was founded in October 2008.

⁴⁹ Besides, the most problematic factors for doing business are ranked very high—like corruption (14.3); policy instability (12.5); access to financing (11.7); inefficient government bureaucracy (11.5). See World Economic

Forum, The Glob iatives/gcp/Global%20Competitiveness%20Report/index.htm

⁵⁰ Pauline H. Baker, "Fixing Failing States: The New Security Agenda," in *The Whitehead Journal of Diplomacy and International Relations*, Vol. VIII, No. 1 (Winter/Spring 2007), pp. 86–87, at <http://blogs.shu.edu/projects/diplomacy/archives/07-Baker.pdf> [last assessed on 1 May 2010].

⁵¹ Serbian Radical Party (SRS), Serbian Progressive party (SNS), Democratic Party of Serbia (DSS), New Serbia (NS), and the United Serbia (JS).

⁵² "Charter of European Identity."

Part Two – Political and Social Values

Serbian Civic Values in a European Context

Ola Listhaug, Kristen Ringdal, and Albert Simkus

Serbia has been among the last of the European post-socialist societies to begin to be assimilated within the broad community of Western and Central European societies. The blockages in the processes of internal political and economic transition have been closely related, as causes and consequences, of this delayed process of assimilation. The delays and blocks in transition and West-Central European assimilation have been accompanied by very deep and serious divisions in Serbian public opinion, with large numbers of Serbs on opposing sides of basic issues, with significant numbers expressing ambivalent attitudes in between these sides.

Diverse citizens of Serbian society have co-existed, and have had to contend with mixed values about their closeness to the societies of the European Union, their aspirations for closer cooperation, and their cooperation with European Union demands. Attraction to the West European community has co-existed with distrust of the Roman Catholic and Protestant countries of the European Union, and with, even more so, distrust of cooperation with the United States. For many Serbs, feelings of solidarity with Russia, Orthodox Slavs, and even Eurasian opposition to United States-European strategic economic and political policies have continued to remain important.

Many other dimensions of international divisions reinforce differences between Serbia and its neighbors, and differences among Serbs. The heritage of distrust, resentment, and unsettled issues of the wars of Yugoslav succession are of great importance. The issue of Kosovar independence, the status of Kosovar Serbs, the delayed prosecution of the most important leaders of the war criminals, and the degree-of-sovereignty issues within Bosnia-Herzegovina are obviously the foremost issues separating Serbia from most of Europe.

The fact that Yugoslav socialism was associated with Southern Slav independence and with multi-cultural tolerance rather than with crude foreign occupation, as in the Soviet occupation of Eastern Europe, or with the extremism of the Hoxha regime in neighboring Albania, gave socialism—particularly in the poorer, and more egalitarian southern republics of former Yugoslavia—continuing legitimacy, especially in the face of the economic “shock therapies” imposed in other post-socialist societies.

Of course, through the first decade of this new century, Serbia has been seen in Western Europe as, to some degree, an outlier or outsider of Europe, not only left out of the “dance” of European expansion, but even reluctant to receive conditional invitations. Short-term winners and losers among the present political players and parties in Serbia will be determined quickly. However, the internal contradictions in this society will not soon disappear. The basic question underlying the analyses presented here is “Is Serbia an outlier because its citizens’ values are fundamentally different from those of most Europeans, or are Serbian attitudes and values not fundamentally different from those of the mass publics of countries with similar developmental and political backgrounds?”

This chapter describes the location of the Serbian public on various dimensions of civic values, compared to other European countries, including those that have achieved national independence after having been republics. This description does not focus on the detailed differences among post-socialist or post-Yugoslav societies, but on Serbia in a broader context. Our description of Serbian civic values is based on a wide range of comparative surveys: the World Values Survey 1999–2004, the 2004 European Social Survey, the International Social Survey Program 2002–2004, and the South-East European Social Survey Program 2003–2004.

We expect values to reflect the cultural and institutional structure of any society. As a guide to expectations about Serbian values, we will start by presenting the theory of Ronald Inglehart and his colleagues in which values are linked to economic modernization.¹ Furthermore, Serbia as a new democracy, shares experiences with other former socialist countries that may be relevant to the determination of political values; and, finally, Serbia’s recent turbulent history of conflict and political isolation may also have contributed to shaping contemporary Serbian values.

The Inglehart-Welzel cultural map of the world is drawn within two general dimensions: traditional versus secular/rational values and the values of survival versus self-expression. These are seen as the basic dimensions behind a large number of specific values. The shift from traditional to secular-rational values is related to the transition from an agrarian to an industrial society. The dimension of survival versus self-expression is linked to development of the service sector, and the post-industrial society. Cultural heritage also plays a role in the formation of values. Religion is one prominent aspect of this, but also the experience of communism in Eastern Europe may continue to influence values in post-communist societies. Economic growth is expected to lead societies away from absolute standards of moral values and towards values that are increasingly rational, tolerant, trusting and participatory. Welzel, Inglehart and Klingemann take this reasoning a step further and argue that socioeconomic development, emancipative cultural change, and democratization constitute a coherent syndrome of social progress, or human development.² In their cultural map of the world, Serbia should be placed within the cluster of ex-communist countries.³

In most new democracies in Eastern Europe, the initial euphoria associated with the transition was replaced by disillusionment as people at large were increasingly experiencing problems associated with the aftermath of the transition. The combination of rising expectations of improved economic well-being on the one hand, and economic decline and increased inequality on the other hand, led to decline in support for democracy and political participation, especially elite-challenging forms of political participation.⁴ What is the situation for Serbia in this respect? Do Serbs show lower support for democratic values than other new democracies, and how do they compare to the established democracies in Western Europe with regard to democratic values and elite challenging political participation?

Serbia's transition to democracy began with the end of more than ten years of dictatorship, war, and internal turmoil. The 13 years of rule by Slobodan Milošević were characterized by authoritarian leadership and Serbian nationalism. Do these characteristics of Serbian politics during the Milošević period reflect basic values in the population of Serbia, or were they driven by elites? Examining the position of Serbia within the variety of European societies included in large cross-national opinion surveys may help answer this question.

Data Sources

The data analyses in this chapter are based on four large-scale comparative social survey projects: the European Values Study (EVS), the European Social Survey (ESS), the International Social Survey Program (ISSP), and the South-East European Social Survey Program (SEESSP).

The European Values Study (EVS)/The World Values Survey

The European Values Study is a large-scale, cross-national, and longitudinal survey research program concentrating on basic human values, initiated by the European Value Systems Study Group (EVSSG) in the late 1970s, at that time an informal grouping of academics. Now, it is carried on in the setting of a foundation, using the (abbreviated) name of the group European Values Study (EVS). EVS is also coordinated with the World Values Survey (WVS), which organizes the surveys outside Europe. Our analysis is based on the fourth round of the EVS/WVS, 1999–2004, in which the data for Serbia were collected in 2002.⁵

The European Social Survey

The ESS is a new, academically-directed social survey program designed to chart and explain the interaction between Europe's changing institutions and the attitudes, beliefs and behavioral patterns of its diverse populations. The ESS, with round 4 completed in 2008, includes more than 30 European countries.⁶ As Serbia is not covered by the ESS, data for Serbia has been added from the SEESSP, which included some ESS-questions.

International Social Survey Programme

The International Social Survey Programme (ISSP) was founded in 1983 by national research institutes from four countries: NORC in the USA, SCPR in Britain, ZUMA in West Germany and ANU in Australia. Since then it has been expanded to include 39 countries in total.⁷ Serbia has not yet joined the ISSP, but questions from the family module (2002), and the national identity module (2003) were also included in the SEESSP with data for Serbia.

The South-East European Social Survey Program (SEESSP)

The main purpose of the South-East European Social Survey Project (SEESSP) was to help fill a gap in the body of cross-national social survey programs in Europe—namely, the relative lack of scientific social survey-based research on sociological topics in the countries from Croatia to Albania. The surveys were conducted during the period November 2003–March 2004. They comprised nationally representative samples including a combined total of more than 20,000 respondents. The surveys were conducted as face-to-face interviews lasting an average of approximately 75 minutes.⁸

Empirical Results

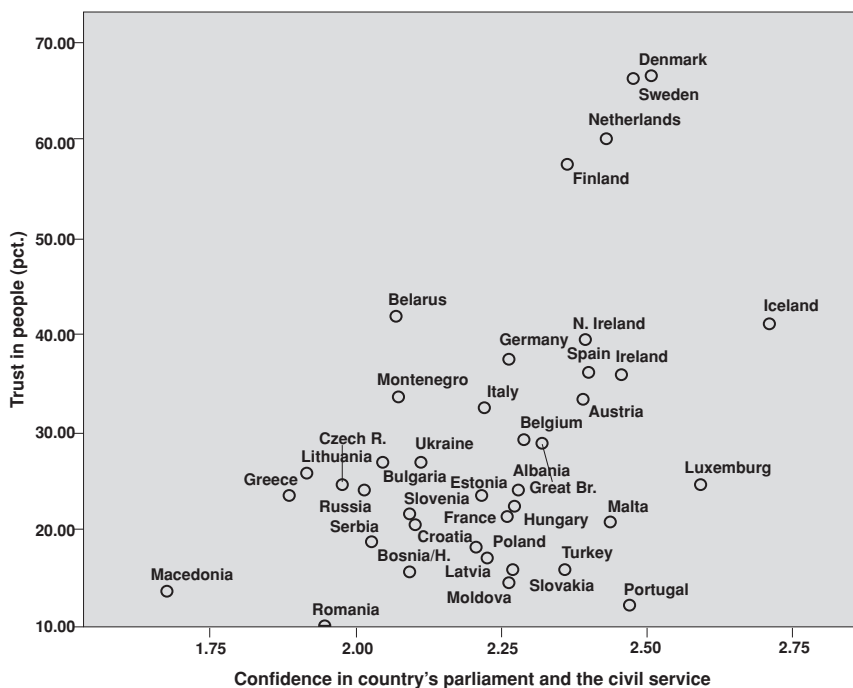
In this section, we will look at civic values that are important for the development of a stable democracy. We will start by describing social and political trust, followed by attitudes towards democracy based on the World Values Survey 1999–2004 where the interviewing in Serbia took place in 2002. Then we examine cultural and political tolerance utilizing the European Social Survey of 2004 and the SEESSP survey of 2003–2004.

Certainly, the history of ethnic conflict amongst the nationalities of former Yugoslavia, issues of territorial sovereignty, and distrust among groups both within Serbia and between Serbia and its neighbors make values and attitudes about ethnic relations very important to the development of civic stability and cooperation. Thus, we use data from the SEESSP survey to compare attitudes towards ethnic exclusionism among ethnic Serbs in Serbia with such attitudes among the major ethnic groups of the surrounding formerly Yugoslav states. We also examine differences in such attitudes among ethnic minorities in Serbia and among Serbs living in different regions of Serbia. And, we show the psychological social distances indicated by ethnic Serbs toward a variety of other nationalities. Finally, we will show the cross-national relationship between levels of happiness and the economic and social development of the countries of Europe, and Serbia's position within this distribution.

Political trust

Trust in other people is regarded as an important part of a country's social capital.⁹ Social capital may bolster political trust and political participation as well as laying ground for economic development. The exact English wording of the personal trust question in the EVS is: "Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted or that you need to be very careful in dealing with people?" There are only two response categories: "Most people can be trusted" and "One can't be too careful."

Figure 1. Trust in people and confidence in political institutions



Data source: World Values Survey, wave 4, 1999–2004, Serbia 2002.

Question about trust in people: Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted or that you need to be very careful in dealing with people? Response categories: Most people can be trusted (1), Can't be too careful (0). Question about confidence in country's parliament and the civil service: I am going to name a number of organizations. For each one, could you tell me how much confidence you have in them: is it a great deal of confidence, quite a lot of confidence, not very much confidence or none at all? Response categories: A great deal (4), Quite a lot (3), Not very much (2), None at all (1). Confidence in parliament and civil service: scale computed as means of two questions.

The results are reported in Figure 1. The trusting answer is chosen by as many as 67 percent of respondents in Denmark and Sweden and as few as 10–12 percent in Romania and Portugal. In Serbia 19 percent of those interviewed answered that most people can be trusted. This is just below the percentage for Croatia. Montenegro is the part of former Yugoslavia that scores highest with 34 percent, Slovenia follows next with 22 percent. Both Bosnians (16 %) and Macedonians (14 %) show lower trust in people than Serbian respondents.

The second dimension in Figure 1 is trust in political institutions. Our measure of trust of this kind is based on questions of the following form. Respondents were told:

“I am going to name a number of organizations. For each one, could you tell me how much confidence you have in it: is it a great deal of confidence, quite a lot of confidence, not very much confidence, or none at all? The response categories ranged from “A great deal” (4), through “Quite a lot” (3), and “Not very much” (2), to “None at all” (1).

Our measure of trust in political institutions is the average score on trust in the parliament and in the civil service. The mean trust score for these countries ranged from a top of 2.7–2.5 in Iceland, Luxembourg, Denmark, Sweden, Portugal and Ireland, to below 1.9 in Greece and Macedonia. Serbia is found in the lower range of the scale with a score of 2.0. This is slightly below most of the former Yugoslav republics, which cluster around a value of 2.1.

This figure also invites us to look at the relationship between trust in people and confidence in political institutions. At the country level, there is a positive correlation of 0.46 between these two dimensions of trust. A few countries, mainly the Nordic countries plus the Netherlands, score high on both dimensions of trust and are thus found in the upper right corner. In the opposite corner, Macedonia shows low levels of both trust in people and confidence in political institutions. Some countries score high on political trust, but relatively lower on trust in people, especially Iceland and Luxembourg. Serbia is located in the lower left corner rather close to several of the former Yugoslav republics: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, and Slovenia. This location is also shared by several other post-communist countries.

Attitudes towards democracy

Next we will look at democratic attitudes as expressed in the WVS wave of surveys during 1999–2004. That wave includes a series of questions on various aspects of democracy:

I'm going to read off some things that people sometimes say about a democratic political system. Could you please tell me if you agree strongly (1), agree (2), disagree (3) or disagree strongly (4), after I read each one of them?

In democracy, the economic system runs badly

Democracies are indecisive and have too much quibbling

Democracies aren't good at maintaining order

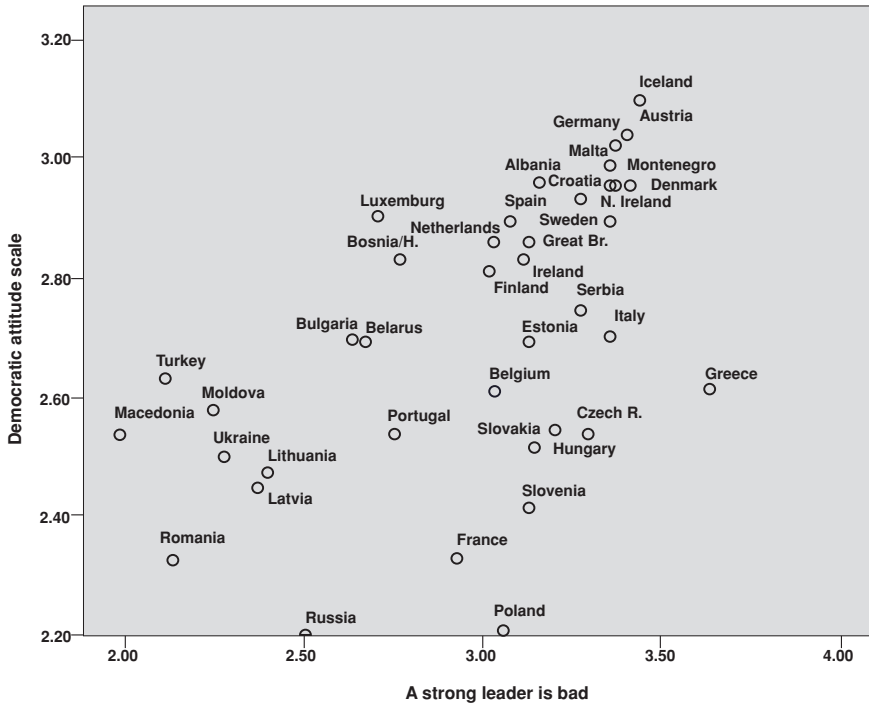
We have computed a scale of democratic attitude as the mean score of those three items, with high scale scores indicating disagreement with these statements. High scores reflect pro-democratic attitudes whereas low scores reflect anti-democratic attitudes. The results are reported in Figure 2. Iceland (3.10), Austria (3.04) and Germany (3.03) show the highest scores. At the other end of the scale, in the direction of anti-democratic attitudes we find Russia (2.20), Poland (2.21) and Romania and France (both 2.33). Serbia is found at a middle rank among the countries with a score of 2.75. The highest score among the former Yugoslav republics is that of Croatia (2.96), and the one case with the lowest score is, rather surprisingly, Slovenia.

The second dimension in Figure 2 indicates attitudes toward having a strong national leader. This measure is based on one question selected from a set of questions with this introduction:

"I'm going to describe various types of political systems and ask what you think about each as a way of governing this country. For each one, would you say it is a very good (1), fairly good (2), fairly bad (3) or very bad (4) way of governing this country?"

The item used here is "Having a strong leader who does not have to bother with parliament and elections."

Again, the response categories are scored so that high values mean disagreeing with the statement, thus reflecting democratic values. The countries with the highest scores are Greece (3.64), Iceland (3.44), Denmark and Austria (3.41). The statement about the need for a strongman leader attracts the strongest support in Macedonia (2.00), Turkey (2.12) and Moldova (2.14). Serbia is found at the upper end of the ranked list with the score of 3.25. Among the remaining Yugoslav successor states, Croatia (3.37) and Montenegro (3.36) scored even higher.

Figure 2. Democratic attitudes

Format for democratic attitude items for the vertical scale:

"I'm going to read off some things that people sometimes say about a democratic political system. Could you please tell me if you agree strongly (1), agree (2), disagree (3) or disagree strongly (4), with each statement, after I read each one of them?"

Statements:

"In democracy, the economic system runs badly."

"Democracies are indecisive and have too much quibbling."

"Democracies aren't good at maintaining order."

The scale of democratic attitudes is computed as the mean score of these three items.

Strong leader measure for the horizontal dimension:

General question: "I'm going to describe various types of political systems and ask what you think about each as a way of governing this country. For each one, would you say it is a very good (1), fairly good (2), fairly bad (3) or very bad (4) way of governing this country?" Specific item: Having a strong leader who does not have to bother with parliament and elections.

Looking at the combined distribution, we find Iceland, Austria, Germany, Malta, Montenegro, Croatia, and Denmark in the upper right corner with relatively high scores on both dimensions, whereas a group of former communist countries (Romania, Latvia, Lithuania, Ukraine, Moldova, Macedonia, and Russia) and Turkey lie in the opposite cor-

ner with values more hostile to democracy. Serbia is found close to the former communist group of countries especially with regard to the rejection of the need for a strong leader.

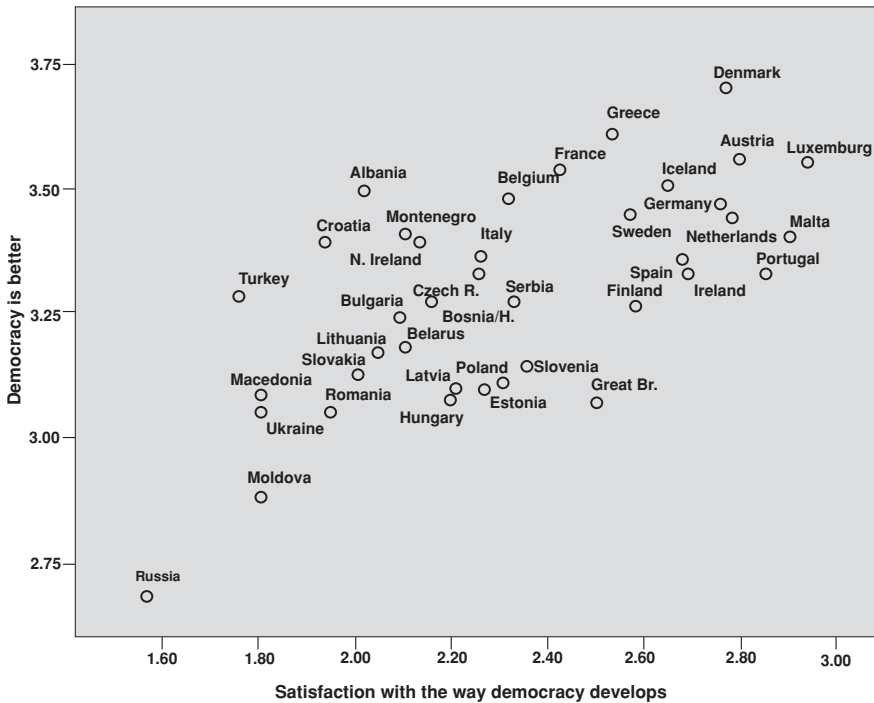
Two more questions about the evaluation of democracy from the World Values Survey of 1999-2004 are the basis for the next figure. First, respondents were asked how much they agreed or disagreed with the statement: "in spite of all its problems, democracy is after all better than any other system." High scores indicate agreement with this statement. The second question regarded "satisfaction with the way democracy develops."

The response categories for both questions are scored from 1 to 4, with high values on the two questions indicating that democracy is better, or satisfaction with democracy. The two-dimensional distribution of the mean scores on the two questions is displayed in Figure 3.

The pattern shows a rather strong linear relationships at the country level ($r = 0.67$). This means that countries with high mean scores on the "democracy is better" question also score high on satisfaction with the way democracy develops. A cluster of mainly West European countries is found in the upper right corner with the most democracy-friendly public opinions. Among these Denmark, Austria, and Luxemburg show the highest scores. In the opposite corner we again find a group of formerly communist countries with Russia as an outlier with especially low scores on both questions. Serbia is found in the middle with average scores on both variables.

Figure 4 is restricted to post-communist countries. The first dimension in the figure represents answers to the question on satisfaction with the way democracy develops and the second involves an evaluation of the former political system in the country on a scale from 1 to 10. We have reversed the original scores so that high values mean that the former political system was considered to be bad.

Most countries where the public evaluates the former system as bad are also relatively satisfied with the way democracy develops. In this respect Serbia and Russia are opposites. Serbia shows the most negative evaluation of the former political system (most likely seen by most citizens as the Milošević regime) and also shows high scores on the way democracy develops, whereas the Russians have a more positive evaluation of the former communist regime, and the Russians are clearly not satisfied with the way democracy has developed. The main exceptions from the linear pattern are Bosnia-Herzegovina and Hungary where the local publics are satisfied with the way democracy has developed but do not see the former (communist) political system as bad.

Figure 3. Evaluation of democracy

Data source: World Values Survey, wave 4, 1999–2004, Serbia 2002.

Democracy is better:

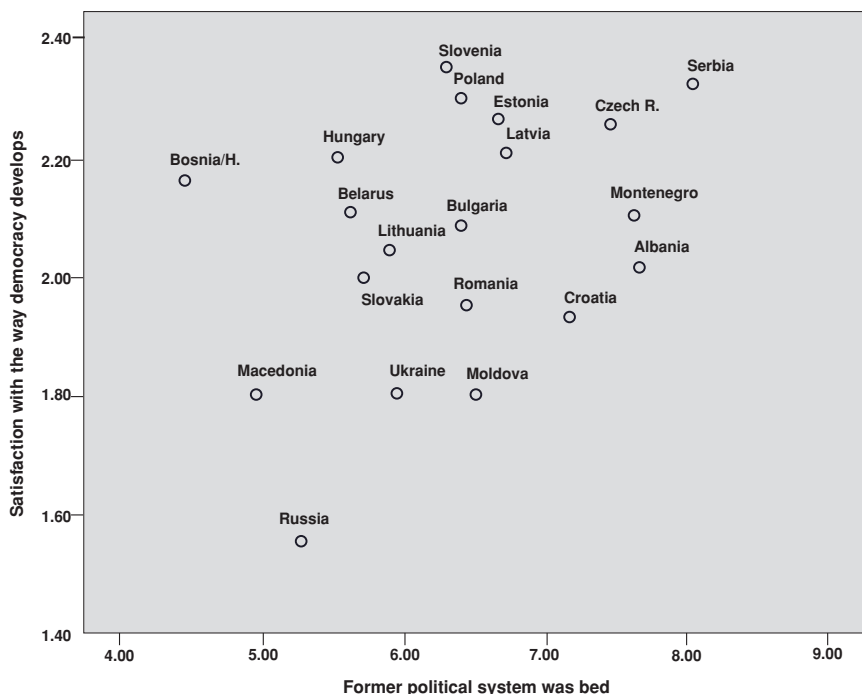
“I’m going to read off some things that people sometimes say about a democratic political system. Could you please tell me if you agree strongly (4), agree (3), disagree (2) or disagree strongly (1), after I read each one of them? Democracy may have problems but it’s better than any other form of government

Satisfaction with the way democracy develops:

On the whole are you very satisfied, rather satisfied, not very satisfied or not at all satisfied with the way democracy is developing in our country?

It should be appreciated that even restricting comparisons to post-communist societies, the precise meaning of “previous political system,” the timing, rapidity, and circumstances of transition, and thus the meaning of the “current political system,” varies substantially across countries, especially in the Western Balkans. And certainly, Serbian attitudes on these items surely reflect to some degree the timing of the 2003–2004 survey data for Serbia.

Figure 4. Evaluation of democracy and former political system among post-communist countries



Data source: World Values Survey, wave 4, 1999–2004, Serbia 2002.

Satisfaction with democracy:

On the whole are you very satisfied (4), rather satisfied (3), not very satisfied (2) or not at all satisfied (1) with the way democracy is developing in our country?

Former political system was bad.

People have different views about the system for governing this country. Here is a scale for rating how well things are going: 1 means very bad; 10 means very good. Where on this scale would you put the political system as it was...[in former communist countries: under communist regime] ...The scale in the table has been reversed so that 10 means very bad.

Cultural and political tolerance

The next theme is tolerance. We will focus on two aspects of tolerance: attitudes towards gays and lesbians and a question regarding political tolerance. Both questions are found in the European Social Survey of 2004 and in the SEESSP survey of 2003–2004. We have combined these data to produce Figure 5. Let us first take a closer look at the wording of the questions:

Using this card, please say to what extent you agree or disagree with each of the following statements:

Gay men and lesbians should be free to live their own lives as they wish.

Political parties that wish to overthrow democracy should be banned.

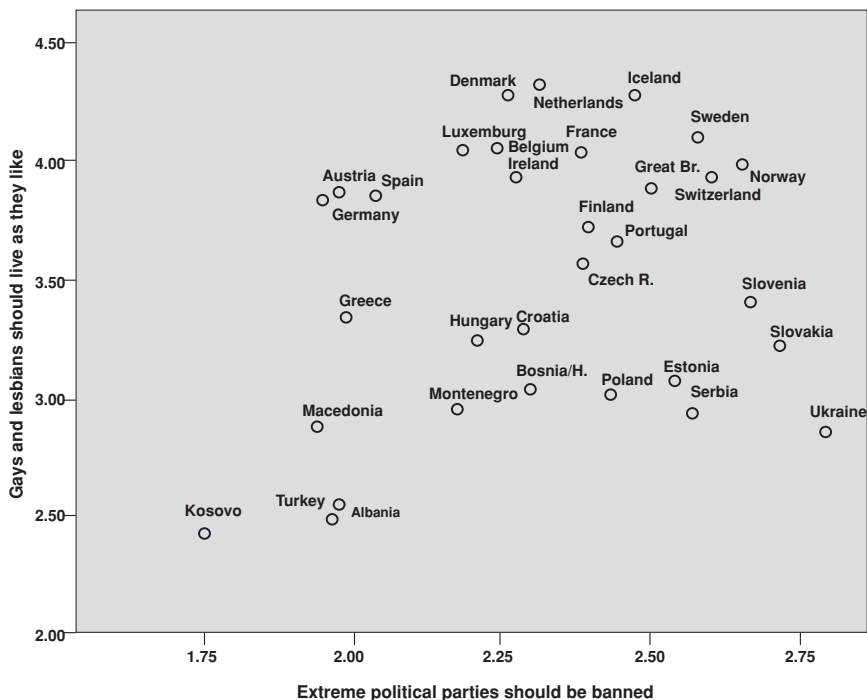
Response categories: Agree strongly, Agree, Neither agree or disagree, Disagree, Disagree strongly.

The response categories were given values of 1 to 5 such that high scores on both questions indicate greater tolerance. Of course, these two questions involve “tolerance” of very different kinds, with different bases. Tolerance of homosexual relationships reflects a “live and let live” acceptance of non-traditionally normative individual sexual behavior. Tolerance of undemocratic political parties, while it may involve support for undemocratic parties by a very small minority, likely primarily reflects openness and tolerance for radical—even anti-democratic speech, and likely a security that such parties are unlikely to achieve political hegemony.

A few countries are found in the lower left corner showing consistent intolerance on both questions: Kosovo, Albania, Turkey, and Macedonia. In the opposite corner we find Iceland, Sweden, Norway, and some other West European countries, all showing high levels of tolerance on both questions. Quite a few countries show inconsistent patterns; among these are Serbia and Ukraine with low tolerance for gays and lesbians but high political tolerance. Some West European countries, specifically, Austria, Germany, and Spain, show high tolerance toward homosexuals but less political tolerance and believe that political parties that wish to overthrow democracy should be banned.

Of course, no discussion of Serbian values can ignore the issues surrounding relations among ethnic groups within Serbia. The particular issues surrounding ethnic relations which are most relevant to Serbia, are quite different from those questions related to immigrant minorities in Europe which have been included in the EVS, ESS, and ISSP survey projects. For this reason, we present comparisons based solely on the Western Balkans and the particular questions included in the SEESSP data.

The first issue we wish to discuss involves the degree of what has variously been referred to as “ethnic intolerance” or “ethnic exclusionism.” This can be assessed by a scale summarizing respondents’ answers to several questions. Respondents were asked:

Figure 5. Political and cultural tolerance

Using this card, please say to what extent you agree or disagree with each of the following statements:

Gay men and lesbians should be free to live their own life as they wish.

Political parties that wish to overthrow democracy should be banned.

Response categories: Agree strongly, Agree, Neither agree or disagree, Disagree, Disagree strongly. The categories were scored 1 to 5 so that a high score indicates tolerance.

Whether they agreed strongly (1), agreed (2), neither agreed nor disagreed (3), disagreed (4), or disagreed strongly (5), to the following five statements:

Nationally mixed marriages must be more unstable than others.

A person can feel completely safe only when the majority belong to his (or her) nation(ality).

Among nations, it is possible to create cooperation, but not full trust.

It is best that villages, towns, and cities be composed of only one nationality

In choosing a spouse, nationality should be one of the most important considerations.

The scores for the responses were reversed such that higher scores indicated greater intolerance or exclusionism, and the scale score was calculated as the average (mean) score. This scale has a high degree of reliability for the SEESSP countries.¹⁰

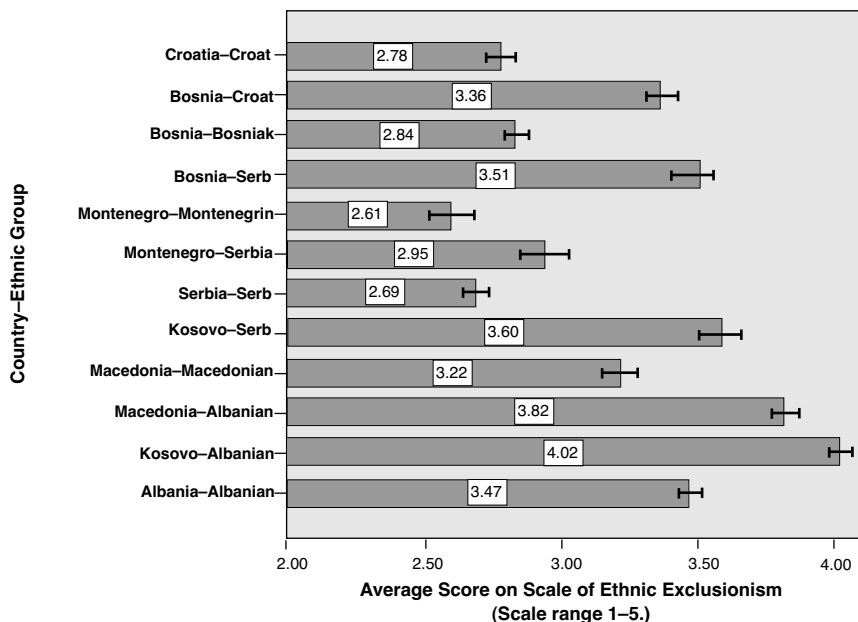
Figure 6 displays a bar chart showing the average scale scores for twelve groups of respondents, defined by the combination of the nation-state in which they lived and their self-identified ethnic group. In most cases, within-country minority groups are only shown when these minorities comprise large populations, with sufficient numbers of respondents in the general and special SEESSP samples for accurate estimates. The bar symbols at the end of each bar indicate the 95% margin of error due to sampling. In the labels for the bars, the first name represents the country in which the respondents live, while the second name indicates the respondents' ethnicity.

We note that the very highest scores are those for ethnic Albanians in Kosovo and Macedonia, while the lowest scores are for self-identified Montenegrins in Montenegro and for Serbs in Serbia. Ethnic Serbs in Kosovo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and to a lesser extent Montenegro, had significantly higher scores than Serbs in Serbia, but lower than Albanians in Kosovo and Macedonia. Serbs in Serbia did not have higher scores than either Croats in Croatia or Bosniaks in Bosnia and Herzegovina; and their scores were lower than those of ethnic Macedonians in Macedonia and ethnic Albanians in Albania. In short, in the Western Balkan region, ethnic Serbs living in Serbia had responses indicating relatively low ethnic exclusionism.¹¹

Differences in ethnic exclusion and intolerance within regions of Serbia

Next, let us consider differences in responses to this scale *within Serbia*—among several of the ethnic minorities in Serbia and among ethnic Serbs living in seven different regions of Serbia. These differences are displayed in Figure 7. The range of values is considerably smaller than among the groups observed in Figure 6 for the Western Balkans as a whole; and, for several categories of ethnic groups and regions within Serbia, the values are lower than those for any of the large groups in the Western Balkans outside Serbia. Nevertheless, significant within-Serbia group differences can be observed. Among minorities, Muslim ethnic Bosniaks show much higher exclusionism than Croats, Hungarians, and a combined group of other small ethnic minorities. Ethnic

Figure 6. Mean scores on the five-item scale of ethnic exclusionism, by major ethnic groups by country



Error bars: 95% confidence limits based on sampling error

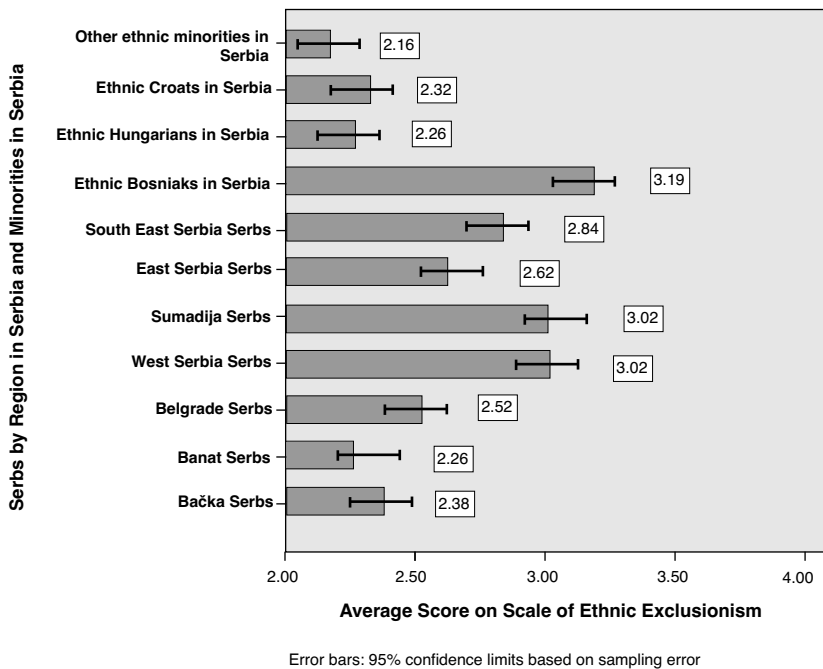
Data source: SEESSP, 2003–2004.

Serbs fall into three categories: Serbs in the Banat, Bačka, and perhaps Belgrade have low scores, while Serbs in Šumadija and West Serbia have significantly higher scores, though not significantly different from those of Bosniaks in Serbian Sandžak. Serbs in East Serbia and South-East Serbia are in the middle of the range of these scores across regions. The scores for the most exclusionist categories within Serbia are lower than those for seven of the twelve Western Balkan groups in Figure 6.

Social distances in relation to different minorities, for ethnic Serbs: in Serbia

We conclude that, measured this way, Serb and Serbian attitudes of ethnic exclusionism in general are relatively low in Serbia. However, how much do ethnic Serb attitudes toward social exclusion differ depending on the specific nationalities involved? The SEESSP survey included a series of questions regarding social-psychological “social

Figure 7. Mean scores for scale of ethnic exclusionism, by ethnic minorities in Serbia and ethnic Serbs by region of Serbia



Data source: SEESSP, 2003–2004.

distances” regarding specific ethnic groups. Respondents were asked as follows:

How would you feel about having different kinds of relationships—like being a neighbor, friend, or relative by marriage—with people from different ethnic groups/nationalities? The relationships are: having such persons living permanently in your country; living in your neighborhood; in the same building or on the same street as you; working with you at your job; as your boss at work; as your friend or companion to spend time with; as a political leader; and as a close relative married to one of your brothers, sisters or children.

For each reference group of a specific nationality, and for each form of relationship, the respondents were given the following three possible responses:

“It makes no difference to me; and it would bother me”; and “I would have strong objections and find it very hard to accept such a person in such a situation.”

The average response across the seven relationships was calculated for each object reference ethnic group to which these questions referred, and these average scores were re-scaled to range from values of 0 to 100, where 0 indicated no objections to any relationship, and 100 indicated the strongest objections to all relationships.

Figure 8 displays these social distance scores for twelve different reference categories of ethnic groups or nationalities. These scores are all based only on the responses of self-identified ethnic Serbs living in Serbia. Clearly, the social distances vary greatly by the reference nationality. Such social distances from Montenegrins are minimal and differences from Macedonians are small. On the other hand, distances from Albanians are very high—twice as great as from Roma, Hungarians, Slovaks, Jews, and other minorities in Serbia. Among minorities with significantly large populations in Serbia, Croats and Bosniaks receive significantly greater social distance scores than the other minorities, with the exception of the very high levels for Albanians.

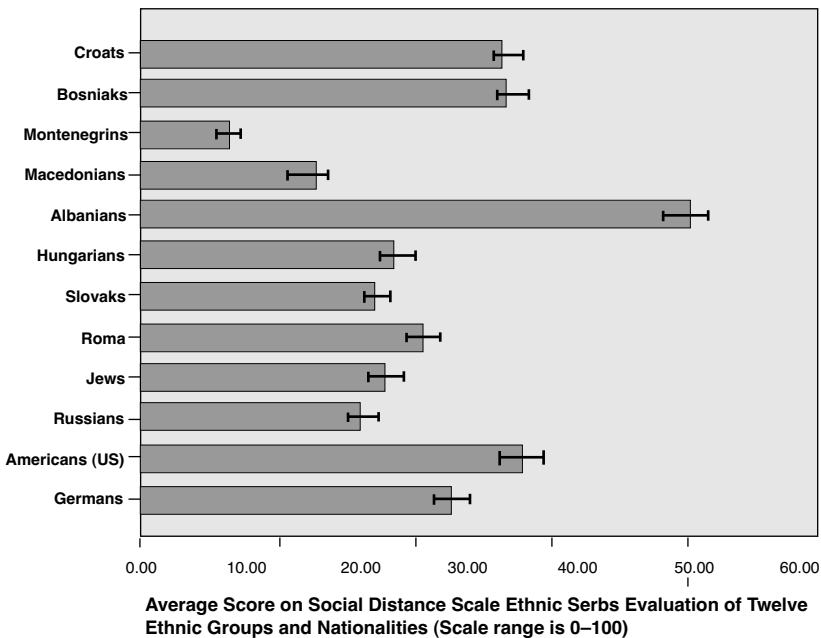
We include the scores for Serb respondents asked about Americans (US), Germans, and Russians, although these categories do not pose the same sort of face-to-face potential relationships as those involving local inhabitants. Serbs felt closest to Russians, Germans, and Americans, in that order. Perceived social distances with regard to Russians were similar to those towards Hungarians, Slovaks, and Jews, whereas distances from Americans were the same or slightly greater than from Croats and Bosniaks.

These social distances are very group-specific, with virtually no separation of Serbs from Montenegrins, moderate separation from a number of within-Serbian minorities, but greater separation from Bosniaks and Croats, undoubtedly related to involvement in outright conflict not so long before the survey. We note that the religious distinction of Roman Catholic Christian versus Muslim between Croats and Bosniaks is not associated with their having different social distances from the Christian Orthodox Serbs in the perceptions of the Serbs. Such social distances regarding Albanians are of such a quantitative magnitude as to be qualitatively different.

Gender roles

The growing empowerment of women in recent decades is well documented in cross-sectional research.¹² The result has been rising opportunities for women in most countries. A range of factors may have contributed to this, including economic development and egalitarian laws. A recent study shows the following factors at the country level to be of importance for female gender empowerment: economic development, a suffragist tradition, and democratic freedom.¹³ Gender empowerment was defined as a composite measure of economic, positional and (political) participatory indicators. Another interesting feature of this study is the finding that emancipative beliefs are very important as mediator of the more objective country level factors. These beliefs are part of what Inglehart and Welzel describe as *self-expression values* that include tolerant activist attitudes and trust in

Figure 8. Mean social distance scores: Ethnic Serb evaluations of twelve ethnic groups and nationalities



Error bars: 95% confidence limits based on sampling error

Data source: SEESSP, 2003–2004.

people. This also includes gender egalitarian values. We describe the location of Serbia in a cross-national comparative context here using two questions that distinguish between traditional and modern gender roles asked in both the ISSP family module of 2002 and in the SEESSP surveys of 2003–2004. The respondents were asked to express to what extent they agreed or disagreed with two statements:

A job is all right, but what most women really want is a home and children.

A man's job is to earn money; a woman's job is to look after the home and family.

The results are displayed in Figure 9 where the response categories are scored such that high values indicate modern gender role values.

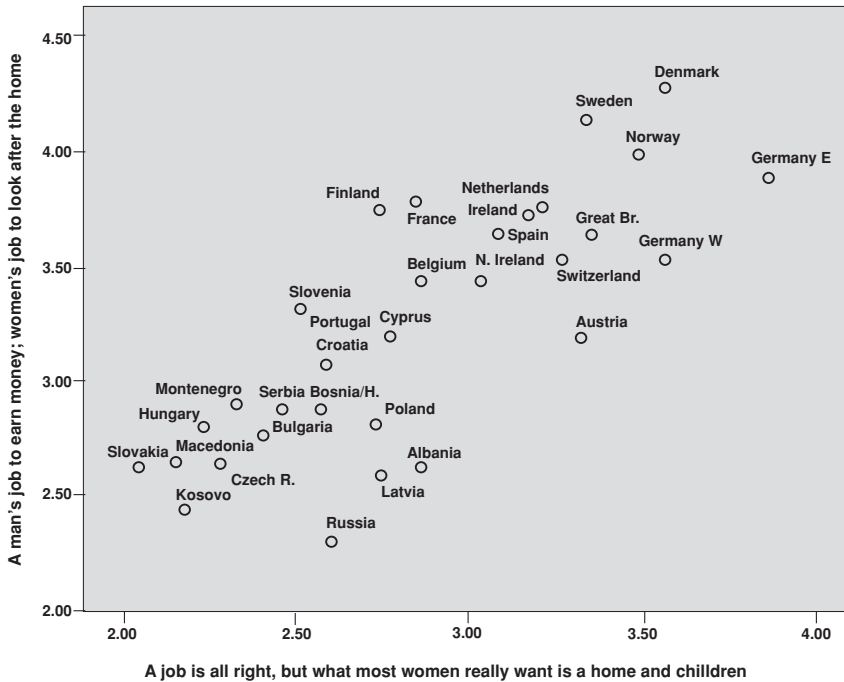
The scatter plot indicates that both questions tap the same dimension of values and the countries fell into the same rankings on both questions. In the upper right corner, indicating high scores on both questions, we find Denmark, Sweden, Norway, and East Germany (data are from the parts of the country which previously constituted the German Democratic Republic), where public opinion clearly disagrees with both statements. In the opposite corner, indicating a more traditional conception of gender roles, we find Kosovo, Slovakia and Russia, among other countries. This cluster also includes Serbia, with Bosnia-Herzegovina, and Bulgaria as close neighbors in the scatterplot.

Happiness and the level of human development

Finally, consider the position of Serbia with regard to the level of human development and happiness. The former is measured on the basis of the Human Development Index (HDI) which is published yearly by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP). The HDI is a composite measure of human development based on three dimensions: life expectancy at birth, an education index, and the index of GDP. The latter measure is the Gross Domestic Product per capita corrected for differences in purchasing power.

The European Social Survey 2004 and the SEESSP 2003–2004 both include a common question on happiness: "Taking all things together, how happy would you say you are?" The respondents were instructed to answer on the basis of choices on a card showing numbers from 0 (extremely unhappy) to 10 (Extremely happy).

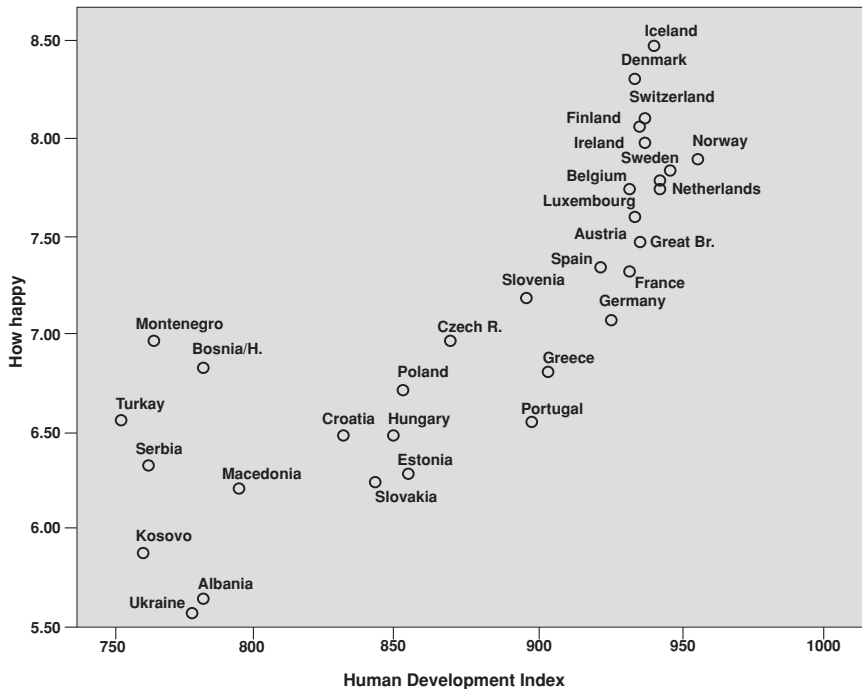
Earlier research indicates that the level of happiness at the country level is closely related to economic development.¹⁴ Therefore, we have

Figure 9. Gender roles

To begin with, we have some questions about women. To what extent do you agree or disagree...?
 A job is all right, but what most women really want is a home and children.
 A man's job is to earn money; a woman's job is to look after the home and family.
 Response categories ranging from "Strongly agree" (1) to "Strongly disagree" (5).

plotted the mean scores on the happiness question on the vertical axis of Figure 10 and the HDI for 2004 on the horizontal axis.

The correlation between the two dimensions at the country level in Figure 10 is indeed strong ($r = 0.84$) and confirms that countries with a high HDI-score high on happiness on the average, while countries with low HDI-scores have low scores on happiness. In both the upper right and the lower left corner there are, however, exceptions. On the lower left, Montenegro, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Turkey, and Serbia all score higher on happiness than what would be expected from their HDI-scores. In the opposite corner, Iceland and Denmark score even higher on happiness than we would expect from their high HDI-scores. Consistent with the pattern, Ukraine, Albania, and Kosovo show the lowest HDI-scores and the lowest happiness scores. The upper right corner is populated with rich West European countries.

Figure 10. Happiness by Human Development Index 2004

Sources: ESS 2004, SEESSP 2003/04, Human Development Index 2004 multiplied by 1000. For Serbia and Montenegro the 2005 scores are used, and Kosovo is set to the value for Serbia.

Taking all things together, how happy would you say you are? Please use this card.

Extremely unhappy ... Extremely happy, (Don't know.)
 00 01 02 03 04 05 06 07 08 09 10 88

Conclusions

We began this chapter pointing out that Serbian society has been considered a political and social outlier, not only within Europe, but among post-communist European countries. We have sought to evaluate whether that view is justified on the basis of the best available cross-national scientific surveys of public opinion related to several issues related to civic values and social development. Our findings indicate that Serbia is not an outlier at all on the themes covered in this chapter. Serbian public opinion is, in general, similar to public opinion in other European societies at similar levels of development and with

similar histories of socialist government. On the two questions of satisfaction with democracy and the evaluation of the former political system, Serbian public opinion in 2004 was located in the position most favorable towards democracy among all post-communist countries. While this fact may be attributed to the demise of Milošević and the freshness of new democratic development in 2004, it demonstrates the positive perception of democracy achieved at that point in Serbia's troubled democratic transition. The waning of this initial exceptional enthusiasm, accompanying the difficult events of subsequent years, might understandably have brought Serbian opinions on democracy into convergence with those in other transitional European countries.

With regard to questions about specific inter-ethnic relations, it is clear that there are differences between the attitudes of ethnic Serbs in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo on the one hand and those of Serbs in Serbia on the other. And, even within Serbia, there are differences in such attitudes across different regions such as Vojvodina and Šumadija. These regional differences in attitudes of Serbs towards other ethnic groups are significant even after controlling for respondents' levels of education, urbanization, age, and religiosity. To characterize all ethnic Serb attitudes toward other ethnic groups as being the same would be quite inaccurate.

In analyses not reported here, we have found that regional differences in public opinion in Serbia are smaller with regard to most other values than with regard to those specifically concerned with ethnic relations. And, as our cross-national comparisons have shown, Serbian civic values and attitudes are neither unique nor exceptional in their European international context. They are similar to those of other European states, particularly those of societies with similar levels of economic development, histories of socialist institutions, and regional location. To the degree that Serbia is separated from Europe, the explanation does not lie in exceptionally different civic opinions on the kind examined here.

Notes

- ¹ Ronald Inglehart and Wayne Baker, "Modernization, Cultural Change, and the Persistence of Traditional Values," in the *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 65, No. 1 (February 2000): 19–51.
- ² Christian Welzel, Ronald Inglehart and Hans-Dieter Klingemann, "The Theory of Human Development: A Cross-Cultural Analysis," in the *European Journal of Political Research*; Vol. 42 (2003): 341–379; and Ronald Inglehart and Wayne Baker, "Modernization, Cultural Change, and the Persistence of Traditional Values," in the *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 65, No. 1 (February 2000): 19–51.
- ³ See World Values Survey, at <http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org>.
- ⁴ Ronald Inglehart and Gabriela Catterberg, "Trends in Political Action: The Developmental Trend and the Post-Honeymoon Decline," in the *International Journal of Comparative Sociology*, Vol. 43, No. 3–5 (October 2002): 300–316.
- ⁵ For more information about the value surveys, see European Values Survey, at <http://www.esds.ac.uk/international/access/evs.asp>.
- ⁶ For more information about the European Social Survey see <http://www.europeansocialsurvey.org>.
- ⁷ Máire Nic Ghiolla Phádraig, "The International Social Survey Programme," pp. 1–5 in Fiachra Kennedy and Christopher Farrington (eds.), *Irish Political Studies Data Yearbook 2003*, Vol. 18 (London: Taylor & Francis, 2003).
- ⁸ Albert Simkus, "Guest Editor's Introduction: The SEESSP Project," in the *International Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 37, No. 3 (Autumn 2007).
- ⁹ Robert Putnam, *Bowling Alone. The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000).
- ¹⁰ Analyses of an overlapping, but not identical, scale have been published based on earlier surveys in former Yugoslavia and more recent surveys in Croatia. See Dusko Sekulic, Garth Massey, and Randy Hodson, "Ethnic intolerance and Ethnic Conflict in the dissolution of Yugoslavia," in *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Vol. 29, No. 5 (September 2006): 797–827; and Randy Hodson, Dusko Sekulic, and Garth Massey, "National Tolerance in Socialist Yugoslavia," in the *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 99, No. 66 (May 1994): 1534–58.
- ¹¹ As reported elsewhere, while years of education and rural residence have significant effects on respondents scores on this scale, the effects of ethnic group of respondent by country explain by far the greatest portion of the variation in this scale, net of the effects of control variables. See Albert Simkus, "Cross-national differences in the Western Balkans in three dimensions of attitudes," in the *International Journal of Sociology*; Vol. 37, No. 3 (Autumn 2007): 15–31. In Figure 6, "Bosnia" refers to Bosnia and Herzegovina.
- ¹² Ronald Inglehart and Pippa Norris, *Rising Tide: Gender Equality and Cultural Change Around the World*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University

Press, 2003); and Ronald Inglehart and Christian Welzel, *Modernization, Cultural Change and Democracy: The Human Development Sequence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

- ¹³ Amy C. Alexander and Christian Welzel, "Empowering Women: The Mediating Role of Subjective Beliefs," Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Western Political Association, Manchester Hyatt, San Diego, California, 20 March 2008, available at http://www.allacademic.com/meta/p238554_index.html.
- ¹⁴ Peggy Schyns, "Crossnational Differences in Happiness: Economic and Cultural Factors Explored," in *Social Indicators Research*, Vol. 43, Nos. 1–2 (February 1998): 3–26; and Rafael Di Tella, Robert J. MacCulloch, and Andrew J. Oswald: "The Macroeconomics of Happiness," in the *Review of Economics and Statistics*; Vol. 85, No. 4 (November 2003): 809–827.

The EU in the Values and Expectations of Serbia: Challenges, Opportunities, and Confrontations*

Stefano Bianchini

*Odi et amo. Quare id faciam, fortasse requiris.
Nescio, sed fieri sentio et excrucior*
Caio Valerio Catullo, Carmina. Odi et amo (LXXXV)

“Europeanness” and the Peculiarities of the Serbian Transition

In an introductory chapter to a book on value changes and transition in Serbia, Dragomir Pantić has observed that values play a double role, since they mirror our time and its relation with the past. Simultaneously, they comprise the capability of going beyond the reality, therefore presenting a pathway for the future.¹

In other words, political, cultural and economic changes strictly depend on reshaping values, although the latter—particularly in societies experiencing radical and comprehensive regime transitions—stem from a peculiar and unpredictable combination of cultural/political (as well as economic and social) legacies and future aspirations. In a time of globalization, these aspirations are deeply influenced by external factors and international agencies. Thus, Serbia is dealing with quite dynamic conditions. The Serbian transition is in fact peculiar—within the European post-socialist world—since it is encompassing different processes simultaneously, in a way that has not been experienced by the other states of the Soviet camp. Truly, Serbia—similarly to the other Yugoslav successor states—has moved from a social self-managed society to a free market democracy since 1990. In this context, however, Serbia could (and can) rely on solid State and institutional traditions whose roots have been established since the 19th century.

* I wish to thank Srđan Bogosavljević, Vojin Dimitrijević, Vesna Pešić, Dragomir Pantić and Dušan Janjić for generously helping me in identifying and collecting the main sources needed for the present study.

At the same time, its society has been deeply traumatized by conflicts, whose social/security component has played a crucial role since the 1980s: in particular, the flourishing of criminality—strengthened in war times—has increased the social insecurity of Serbs dramatically. Nevertheless, these conflicts have not been merely social, since their ethno-cultural and military component was predominant, deeply affecting the relations either with the new neighboring states or with Serbian domestic minorities (mostly to the detriment of the Albanians in Kosovo).

Additionally, Serbian society—and this is a peculiarity in the European post-socialist framework—has suffered from long-term political and cultural international isolation, as well as from a well-rooted negative bias, having been systematically considered for a couple of decades the “pariah” of the “European family,” as a consequence of Milošević’s policy, which finally led to the NATO bombing in 1999. Moreover, Serbia is a country with an undefined territory and—after 17 February 2008—its size is differently recognized internationally.

In other words, despite the overthrowing of Milošević in 2000 and the democratic developments of its institutional system since then, Serbia is not yet a post-conflict society, where the political elite is expected to reconstruct ties and norms after a regime/State collapse. On the contrary, Serbia is still an in-conflict society: in-conflict with itself, with its statehood, with some of its neighbors, and international agents. Moreover, the post-socialist transition is not necessarily a post-nationalist transition.

In Serbia, the end of the “dictatorship of the proletariat” has been followed by an authoritarian nationalist regime, able to tolerate a multi-party system (although under severe constraints), as soon as the Yugoslav dismemberment started. Its decline—between 1997 and 2000—paved the way for the regular functioning of democratic rules and institutions, although the stability of the Serbian society remains to be achieved in the coming decades.

Particularly, nationalism—and the political culture it generates—proved to be well rooted in the society, far beyond the personal role played by Milošević in the 1990s. Contrary to the naïve expectations of the United States and the older member states of the European Union, Serbian nationalism was not defeated when the project of Great Serbia vanished and Kosovo became a UN administrative territory in 1999. As a matter of fact, even when Milošević was arrested and sent to Scheveningen in order to be prosecuted at the ICTY, the nationalist

vision—with its values and expectations—was able to mobilize a significant component of the Serbian political elite and of its society. At the same time, however, and in spite of all that, Serbian society has deeply changed.

Suffice it here to remember that the Freedom House Survey conceded to Serbia (an “electoral democracy” is how it has been defined) the status of a “free country” in 2007: despite the assassination of the Prime Minister Zoran Đinđić in 2003, and a persistently high level of criminality and corruption in the society, Freedom House recognized that the fundamental freedoms and civil liberties are guaranteed, ethnic minorities have their own parties and access to the media, legal and judicial reforms have been approached, and institutional capacity is strengthening.²

Definitely, the isolation of the country was softened when the new century began, and the European Union intensified its commitment in South East Europe. Moreover, as it is well known, since May 2004, the European Union has grown from 15 member states to 27, and now counts 500 million inhabitants in all: as a result, Northern and Eastern Serbia share borders with EU member states.

Meanwhile, a more systematic action of the EU in the Balkans has led to the Ohrid and Belgrade agreements, with the aim of stabilizing the region. As a result of these diplomatic actions, a clear commitment to further enlargement in the direction of the Balkans was expressed in 2003 at the Thessaloniki meeting. New hopes are raised in the region, where people are deeply aware of their own “European belonging.” Apparently, a new phase started at that time.

Nonetheless, whatever the term “European belonging” means, it remains a controversial issue. In continental terms, European geopolitics remain contested when, for instance, it concerns its Eastern borders and the inclusion of Turkey. By contrast, the Balkans are undisputedly incorporated in the notion, and polls confirm that this vision is taken for granted by the local population: in Serbia, 7% of those interviewed in 2007 recognized that it was “natural,” for their country, to become an EU member for historical and cultural reasons, and 70% conceded that similarities in values were also suggesting the prospect of inclusion.³ Significantly enough, however, the sense of “European-ness” varies, according to the values we are referring to.

If we look at the EU values, they have been reshaped on the basis of different, previous documents (from the founding Treaties to the Copenhagen criteria) and described in the *EU's Charter of Fundamen-*

tal Rights, approved in Nice in 2000. Later, they were included in the EU's Constitutional Treaty of 2004 and formally proclaimed as the Union's values in article I-2. Specific care has been devoted to political, civil, and economic rights, by strengthening respect for human dignity, the rule of law, and the protection of minorities, liberty, democracy, gender equality, as well as cultural, religious and linguistic equality, solidarity in the working and professional environments, healthcare, consumer and environmental protection, tolerance, pluralism, non-discrimination, justice, and citizenship rights. We can therefore identify "Europeanness" in this set of values.

Nonetheless, the failure of referenda on the Constitutional Treaty in France and the Netherlands in 2005 created a great deal of uncertainty about European integration. The United Kingdom and Poland opted out from article 6 of the amendments included in the following Lisbon Treaty, which possesses the same legal value as the other Treaties to the EU's Charter of fundamental rights, while some member states feel encouraged to impose a slower pace in the negotiations with the new candidate, or potential candidate countries from the Balkans, claiming primarily the necessity of satisfying the "absorption capacity" of the Union.

In this controversial framework, where political openness and reluctance mix within the European institutions and in the behavior of the member states, the content of "Europeanness" in the EU was *de facto* weakened, affecting its attractiveness as well. Meanwhile, Serbia has found itself in an even more confused and contradictory situation than it was when Milošević's rule was over in the year 2000.

Since then, in fact, its multiple and complex transition has suffered remarkably because two uncertainties met. Hopes for democratization and EU-oriented reforms were often jeopardized, either by the aforementioned widespread criminality or by the regional geopolitical unpredictability, connected to the nationalist tensions within the country, and the claims for independence in Montenegro and Kosovo.

Particularly, one should note that among the declared EU values there are no references to sovereignty and territorial integrity of a state. In a sense, it is understandable, since the EU—although *sui generis*—is a supranational *political* organization and none of its member states have suffered from limitations related to their territorial integrity, at least after the Second World War and with the exception of Cyprus, which anyhow joined the EU only recently (in 2004).

However, this is not the case of Serbia, as a neighbor and/or potential

EU candidate: sovereignty and territorial integrity have been disputed since 1991, if we consider that a significant part of its elite supported the idea of a Greater Serbia, by trying to include Bosnia-Herzegovina (or at least a significant component of it) and the Croatian Krajina in Serbia. The Dayton agreement put an end to these hopes, but Serbian integrity remained contested because Belgrade continued to identify itself ambiguously with the idea of Yugoslavia, and saw itself as its unique legitimate successor or in a federation with Montenegro. Then, Montenegro became independent in 2006, and Kosovo followed in 2008 with the support of a number of EU member states.

In this context, as argued later on, a reshaping (instead of a repudiation) of nationalist feelings and values occurred in the country, while the coalition governments in Belgrade remained weak. Clashes between the parties offered fertile ground for the activities of the Radicals, who achieved an influential role, with their own claims to preserve traditional and patriotic values, while getting the support of the Serbian Orthodox Church. Meanwhile, the EU commission has continued to insist on the government's cooperation with the ICTY and on the arrest of the indicted war criminal Ratko Mladić, as preconditions for strengthening relations with Serbia. As a result, the incentives offered by the EU commission to Belgrade have had an increasingly limited impact.

Serbian society and European values in the polls

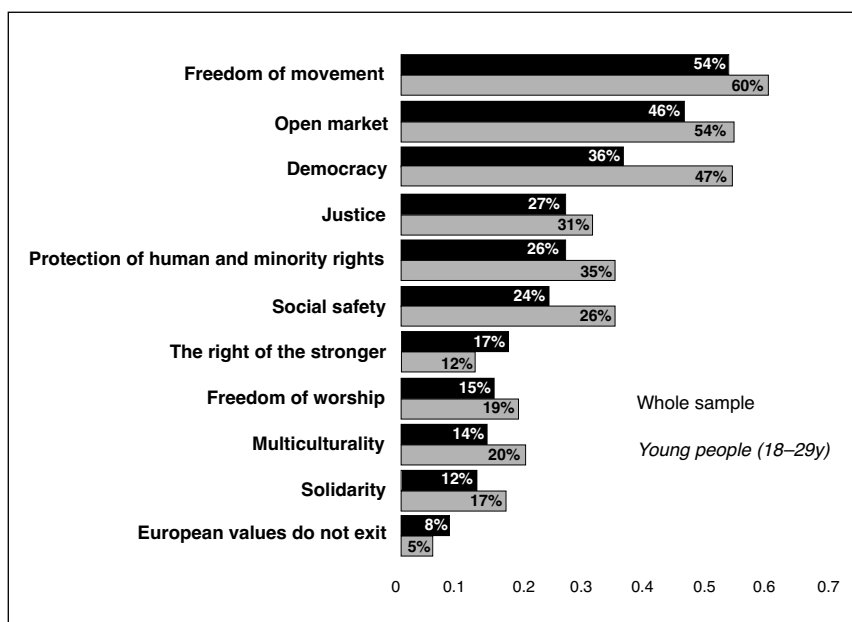
This background, however rapidly sketched, is crucial for understanding to what extent the EU plays a role in the construction of values in Serbia, and what are its limitations, when we consider the expectations of Serbian people. A key consideration is the fact that these values are not relying on a set of stable factors, although—generally speaking—an absolute stability is out of question, when values are concerned. Nonetheless, in our case, the level of instability is very high: the uncertainties of the Serbian society mirror the ambivalence of a situation in which the claims to democracy, liberty, equality, and tolerance mix with a still persistent societal vision based on hierarchical and patriarchal values, on national patriotism, victimization, and a sense of cultural discrimination. This reflects its own sense of isolation in terms of limitations to international mobility, highly restricting freedom of traveling, studying and visiting abroad.

Therefore, the EU is a target of clashing feelings that the polls conducted in 2003–2008 have repeatedly emphasized. On the one hand,

the Union is seen as a political organization, which can offer a positive future through integration and inclusion. On the other hand, it is an enemy for at least three main reasons: namely, (1) the sanctions imposed in the 1990s, (2) the bombing of Serbia and Montenegro in 1999, and (3) the decision of the majority of its member states to recognize the unilateral declaration of independence of Kosovo in February 2008. Comparative analyses of the Serbian perceptions of the EU values confirm this analysis.

According to the data collected by *Strategic Marketing* through an opinion poll based on interviews with 1047 people in June 2007 in Serbia without Kosovo, the most relevant values that Serbian people recognize as European values are related to social and economic welfare. Looking at Table 1, the reader can easily see how freedom of movement (54%) and open market (46%) are by far considered the most relevant values associated with the European Union, while democracy holds the 3rd position in the rank, and justice the 4th only, at some distance.

Table 1. Serbian Perception of EU Values



Source: Srđan Bogosavljević, European orientation of the Citizens of Serbia. Trends (Belgrade: Strategic Marketing, June 2007)

It is interesting to note that the answers given by all interviewees and those of the young people do not differ significantly in ranking these values, with the exception of the protection of human rights and minorities, which sounds more significant to young generations, even more than justice, while multiculturalism slightly surpasses—among young people—the freedom of worship, although both are located in the bottom of the sequence.

In other words, the values perception in Serbian society, in the period between the declarations of independence of Montenegro and Kosovo, has been related mainly to economic development and the visa policy, rather than to political aspects concerning democracy, human rights, and justice. Partially, this is again understandable, because a multiparty system exists since 1990, media are basically free (especially after Milošević's overthrow), ethnic minorities (mostly in Vojvodina and Sandžak) are accepted and able to self-organize: in other words, the formal democracy is working and—at least in people's perception—regardless of the EU conditionality.

At the same time, the importance assigned to mobility and development by interviewees is evidence of the claustrophobic perception that Serbian citizens have of their reality. Pressured by sanctions and isolation, after decades of free mobility under the Tito's regime, the shock provoked by the war and the international exclusion in the 1990s have strengthened among the Serbs a sense of claustrophobia, which has been reinforced particularly in the youth and in those sectors who opposed Milošević's regime. Although mostly underestimated by the transatlantic societies, these components of the Serbian society have been notable in number and consistency (while politically divided) throughout the 1990s: however, since the isolation concerned Serbia as a whole, they did not understand why they had to suffer from a punishment connected to a policy they never supported. On the contrary, those who claimed the legitimacy of the Serbian nationalist goals considered isolation and international interference a blatant abuse of their rights, while seeking to implement a project of national unification inspired by the 19th century pathways, although deeply distorted by an ethnic interpretation.⁴

In the end, the contradictory interaction of these feelings and memories has contributed to rooting firm beliefs, which include a "Europeanness" of Serbia (culturally taken for granted) and the goal of being included into the EU, as the only available way out from a distressed sense of enclosure, which however encompasses a high degree of self-

reliance as well. Similarly, contradictory approaches can be identified in two key-aspects of EU values: human rights and tolerance. In particular, if these behaviors are measured in relation to war crimes and homosexuality respectively, the reaction of the society is more surprising than one can expect. The Belgrade Center of Human Rights regularly publishes research since 1998 on these matters.⁵

In 2004, a poll pointed out that only 16% of the citizens trusted the judicial system in Serbia; in 2005 the percentage declined to 8% and in 2006 was 9%. Nonetheless, when the question of war crimes was raised in 2004, it turned out that 57% believed that the Serbian judicial system was *better* prepared to prosecuting war criminals than the ICTY in the Hague, and 71% shared the opinion that trials against war criminals should take place in Serbia rather than abroad. This attitude did not significantly changed in 2005 and 2006, when—addressing the issue of the war crimes trials—the polls registered a level of trust respectively of 60% and 56% in the Serbian judicial system. In other words, a schizophrenic behavior prevails in Serbian population, when dealing with justice and human rights. Home justice is dramatically mistrusted, but yet considered a more functional way to deal with crimes committed in the Yugoslav secession wars. Polls therefore make clear that Serbia's relations with neighbors and the transatlantic view of the war responsibilities are challenged by Serbian public opinion. Definitely, nationalists do not believe in Serbian war responsibilities, but also Milošević's opponents—who concede a positive settlement of war accounts—reject any reference to collective guilt, because they do not think of themselves as perpetrators of crimes. As a result, Serbia is quite a different case from Germany after 1945, and a sort of “collective shame” similar to what occurred against Nazism is unlikely to take root in Belgrade. On the contrary, the Kosovo issue is likely to deepen the controversies associated with the relationship with the EU (and mostly with the United States), fuelling new resentments and reservations in a *mélange* of feelings, which are exasperated by the sense of isolation and international misunderstanding.⁶

By way of confirmation, although 75% of citizens in 2004 (before the independence of Montenegro and Kosovo) regarded coming to terms with the war past in the territory of Socialist Yugoslavia as positive for the future of the country, they were polarized into two slightly equal camps about the reasons why the settlement was necessary. While a tiny majority (50.6%) believed that the settlement would make evident the lack of Serbian responsibility (making the future generations free

from any charge in this regard), the others (49.3%) believed exactly the contrary, namely that the settlement would help Serbian society to take responsibility for what had occurred in Yugoslavia, accomplishing therefore a crucial prerequisite for being accepted again in the international community. One year later, those who regarded coming to terms with the war as positive declined to 70%, but the polarization went to the detriment of those believing that the settlement will be helpful for taking responsibility of the crimes committed, since the support in this sense decreased to 47.1% against around 53% of those thinking quite the opposite.⁷

Following the trend, in 2006 the polls registered a declining trust among the population about the possibility of achieving a true picture of what had happened during the war: 39% instead of 50% (in 2005) conceded that at least a partial truth could be established in the courts, in spite of the fact that 35% of the population in 2006 (against the 26% in 2005) believed that local judgments would contribute to the post-war reconciliation.

A comparative analysis of the Serbian citizens' behaviors towards ICTY showed that between 2003 and 2006 the percentage of people believing that cooperation with the ICTY was necessary in order to achieve justice remained low, around 15%, while between 29% (in 2003) and 26% (in 2006) conceded that the cooperation was necessary in order to be again included in the international arena. Meanwhile, the view supporting an instrumental cooperation with ICTY in order just to avoid sanctions declined, in the people's perception, from 41% in 2003 to 28% in 2006, although 19% firmly believed that no cooperation with ICTY should be embraced.⁸ Finally, in 2004 84% of Serbian citizens shared the opinion that the qualification of a war criminal should not be connected to his/her nationality, although 11% of the population professed some uncertainties in this regard.⁹

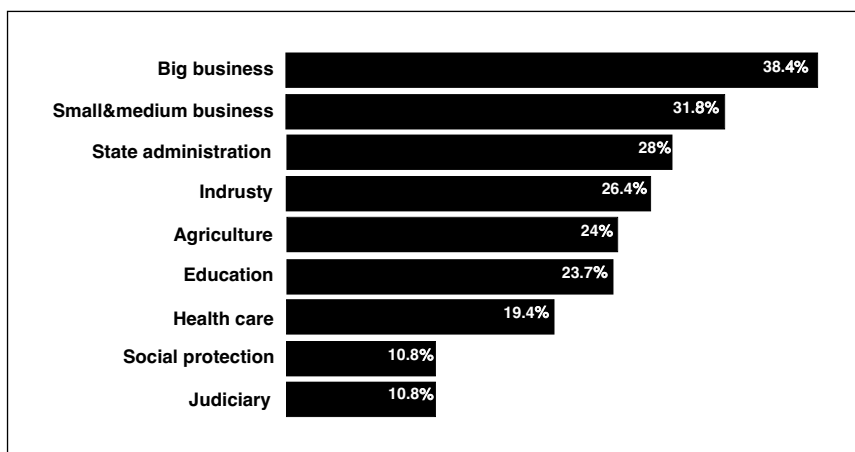
In conclusion, Serbian citizens have a very differentiated approach to human rights, when it concerns war responsibilities and reconciliation. A deep divide is characterizing the society; by way of confirmation, the political/cultural dimension of the European values—emphasized in the Article I-2 of the failed Constitutional Treaty in relation to human dignity, the rule of law, and protection of minorities—is still accepted with reservations, as soon as the questions of the polls enter into details and evoke the recent tragic Yugoslav events. Furthermore, since human dignity and minorities' protection are not restricted to

ethnic groups, the picture is even more controversial when tolerance towards sexual minorities is measured.

According to research conducted in Autumn 2005 by Labris, the lesbian association for human rights in Belgrade, 87.6% of gays and lesbians interviewed reported that they knew people who had been victims of violence because of their homosexuality, while 65.3% of them said that they had personally suffered from such acts. The Belgrade Center for Human Rights recorded repeatedly (from the press or from other sources) examples of discrimination, intolerance, and violence against sexual minorities.¹⁰ In 2005 the general perception was that discrimination was directed against homosexuals first; women followed, while ethnic minorities came in third. According to a poll recorded by the Belgrade center of human rights, 48% of Serbian citizens (5% less than in 2004) thought that discrimination against homosexuals existed; 41% (3% more than in 2004) believed that women were discriminated against, especially in employment and job's careers, to the benefit of their male colleagues, while 20% (5% more than in 2004) conceded that ethnic minorities enjoyed less rights than the majority.¹¹

Interestingly enough, however, people apparently do not associate the potential mitigation of these inequalities with the positive changes expected from future integration in the EU. On the contrary, polls con-

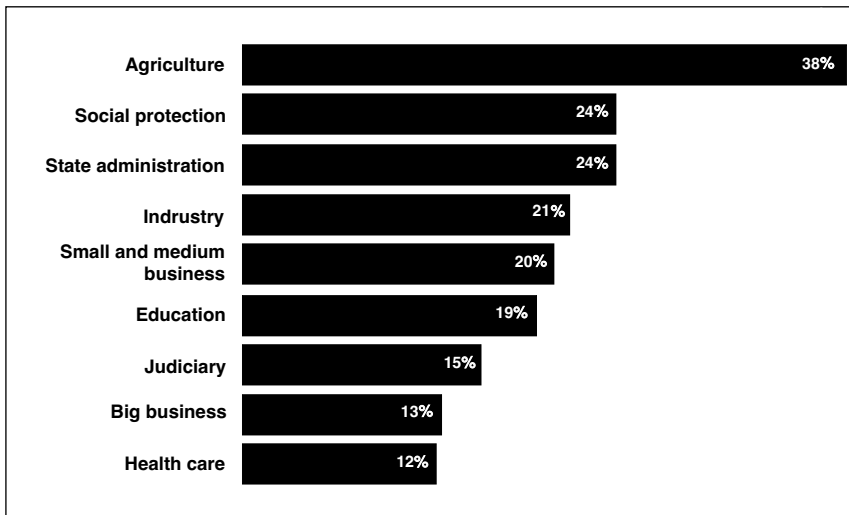
Table 2. Perceptions about areas benefiting from EU integration



Source: Srđan Bogoslavljević, European orientation of the Citizens of Serbia. Trends (Belgrade: Strategic Marketing, June 2007)

firm—as reported in Tables 2 and 3 here below—that the positive perception is mainly associated, by citizens, with economic improvements of individuals and families, as well as with the development of business, either big, small or medium-sized enterprises. By contrast, agriculture, state administration and social protection are listed among the areas that will be damaged, mirroring in a sense the opinion of the

Table 3. Perception about areas threatened by EU integration

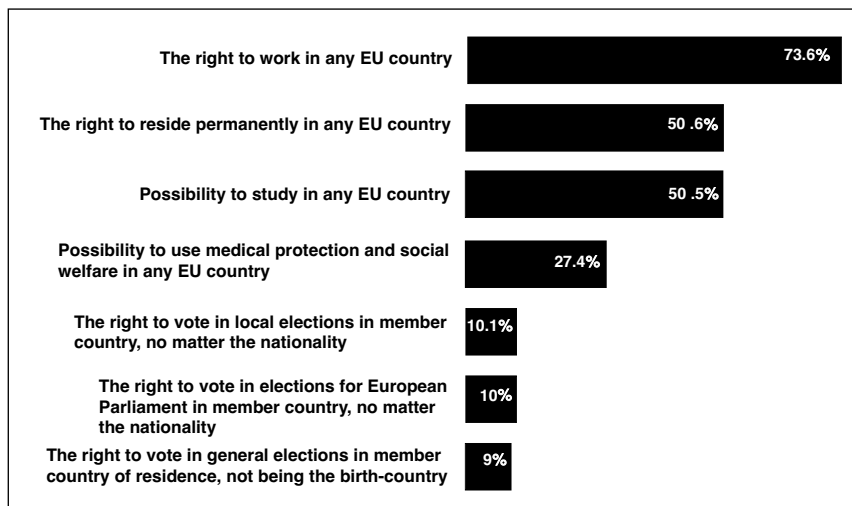


Source: Srđan Bogoslavljević, *European orientation of the Citizens of Serbia. Trends* (Belgrade: Strategic Marketing, June 2007)

“losers” of the transition, and in spite of the fact—as the Polish case confirms—that the countryside is one of the areas, which benefit the most from EU integration.

Anyway, the fact that social protection and the judiciary are expected to be the areas less affected by positive changes, together with education (and public health), says a lot about the lack of knowledge and distorted perceptions that Serbian public opinion has about the European Union.

By way of confirmation, table 4 tells us that Serbian citizens identify the most appreciable benefits of being citizens of the EU with the possibility of working in any EU country (73.6%), residing permanently in any EU country (50.6%), studying in any EU country (50.5%). Under-

Table 4. The benefits of the EU in individual perceptions

Source: Srđan Bogoslavljević, European orientation of the Citizens of Serbia. Trends (Belgrade: Strategic Marketing, June 2007)

standably, the latter has been particularly emphasized by young generations (62%) and, in fact, is the only item where the adult population and youth significantly differ.

The same poll confirmed that people associate the EU primarily with a better standard of life (23% of the interviewed) and with free traveling/Schengen visa (10% of the interviewed). Only 6% of interviewed expressed their preference for the EU as a Union of countries (third topic in the rank list). In other words, the poll offered a vivid picture on how rooted the sense of claustrophobia was in Serbia and how widespread the desire to cross the border, even temporarily. Political values and benefits related to rights of voting, human rights and minorities protection, well functioning institutions were listed at the end, apparently considered less relevant than those connected to earnings and mobility.

The EU, Kosovo and the Statehood in Serbia

These feelings did not significantly change between 2007 and 2008, on the eve of the presidential election and of the Kosovo's proclamation of independence. A new poll requested in January 2008 by the

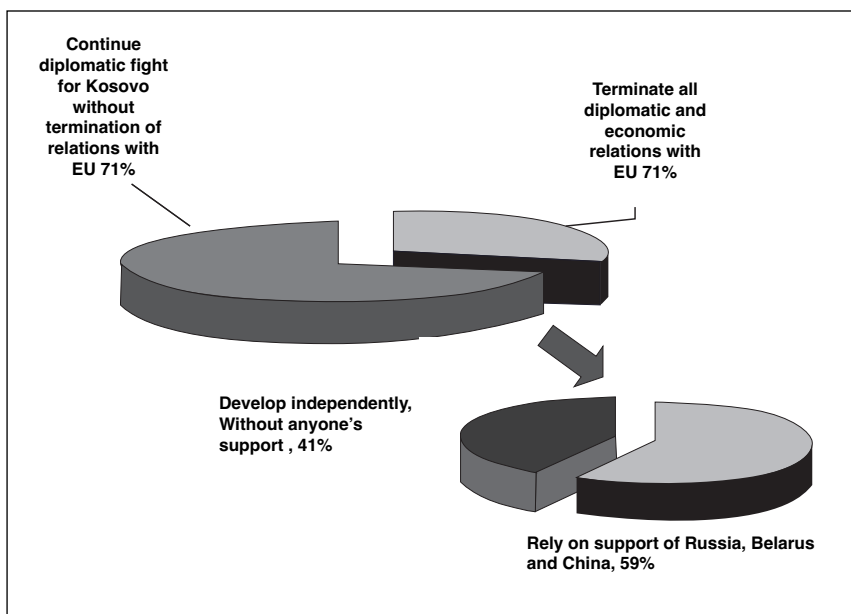
European Movement in Serbia of the Strategic Puls Group has confirmed that people associate the EU with a better standard of life (36%) and freedom of traveling (23%); it was not by chance, therefore, that these figures have encouraged the European commission to negotiate a new, more open, visa régime with Belgrade between the two terms of the presidential elections, in order to support Tadić against Nikolić, with the additional illusion that this decision would have made the Kosovo's amputation more acceptable to Serbia.

Significantly enough, when Kosovo officially proclaimed its detachment from Belgrade, and Putin supported the Serbian government, which resolutely rejected the recognitions of other countries, Serbia cancelled the visa régime for Russian citizens, and Russia did the same for Serbians a few days later. In fact, when people were requested in 2007 to express their view about the future of Kosovo and its relation with EU negotiations, the reactions of the Serbian public showed an obvious division and confusion.

On the one hand, as summarized in Table 5 here below, 45% of citizens (among those 52% aged more than 65 or between 30–39) believed that the EU was conditioning Serbia to give up Kosovo for the sake of integration, while 31% considered the two issues only formally unconnected, and 24% actually independent (with the 31% of these interviewed notably concentrated in Vojvodina). On the other hand, a wide majority of citizens (71%) shared the opinion that Belgrade should fight diplomatically for Kosovo without breaking relations with the EU, in the event that Kosovo would declare its independence unilaterally, although the responsibility for Kosovo's status was assigned to the EU (39%), NATO (34%) and the UN (29%), making evident how divergent considerations were winding into the Serbian public opinion over this issue.

It is also worthy of note that in 2007 around 30% of the population supported the idea of breaking relations with the EU, in case of any unilateral recognition of Kosovo; 59% of them suggested turning toward Russia, China and Belarus, with 41% endorsing autarkic solutions.¹² A year earlier, a poll conducted together by a Serbian and an Albanian company for USAID registered that 84% of the Serbs in Serbia and 88% of the Serbs in Kosovo were dissatisfied or deeply dissatisfied about the talks in Vienna on the future status of Kosovo, while 63% of the Serbs from Serbia (and 34% of the Serbs in Kosovo only) were inclined to accept a compromise that actually has not been achieved.¹³

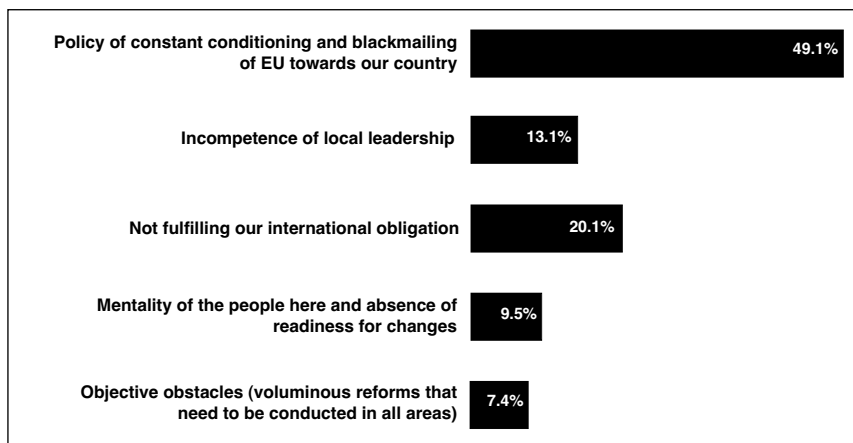
Table 5. Kosovo, the EU and Serbian policy: what Belgrade should do if the EU recognizes the independence of Kosovo



Source: Srđan Bogoslavljević, European orientation of the Citizens of Serbia. Trends (Belgrade: Strategic Marketing, June 2007)

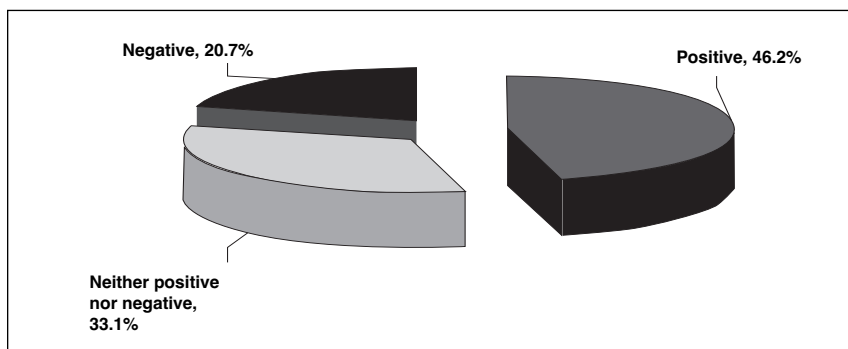
Furthermore, looking at the following table (Table 6), the reader can note that a high percentage of people interviewed in 2007 (nearly 50%) considered EU conditionality a way of blackmailing Serbia, while the incompetence of the local leaders was criticized by just a restricted number of citizens (less than 14%). Therefore, the fact that more than 20% of the population attributed to an unsatisfactory fulfilling of international obligations the main reason why Serbian integration in the EU was obstructed should not be considered a negative critique of the local political leadership, particularly if we have in mind the high number of people who have an elaborately negative perception of EU leverage. Definitely, the Kosovo issue had a strong impact in determining such an evaluation of the EU conditionality.

To sum up, it is within this contradictory framework of reference that the EU is viewed as a desirable goal for the future. The positive attitude of the Serbian population towards the EU has even increased dramatically between 2007 and 2008, at least according to the polls.

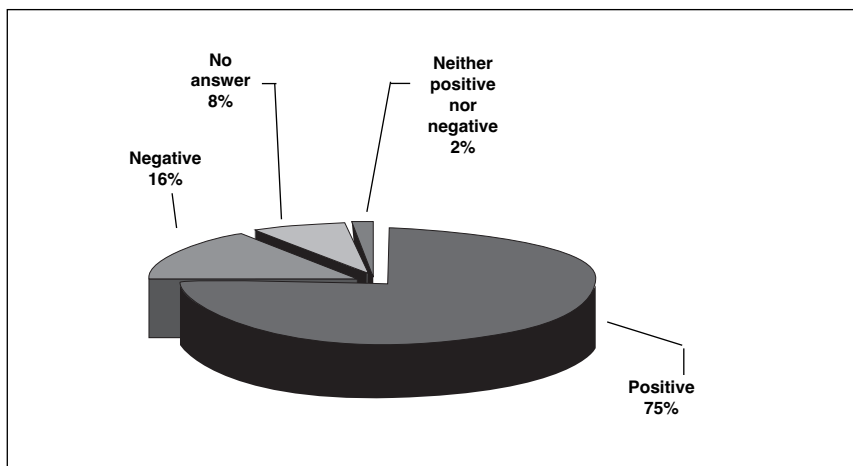
Table 6. The factors which obstruct Serbian integration into the EU

Source: Srđan Bogosavljević, European orientation of the Citizens of Serbia. Trends (Belgrade: Strategic Marketing, June 2007)

As a result, if Strategic Marketing registered in July 2007 46.2% of the citizens in support of the EU support (and 20.7% against), the *European Movement* recorded a 75% of support (16% against) in January 2008. This positive inclination, however, did not alter the vision and the ranking of the European values amongst the Serbian people, since the standard of life and the freedom of movement remained by far on the top of their preferences in the list.¹⁴

Table 7. Serbian attitude towards the EU in 2007

Source: Srđan Bogosavljević, European orientation of the Citizens of Serbia. Trends (Belgrade: Strategic Marketing, June 2007)

Table 8. Serbia attitude towards the EU in 2008

Source: European Movement in Serbia, Javno mnjenje o pridruženju Srbije Evropskoj Uniji, (Belgrade: StretegicPuls Group, January 2008)

The day before Kosovo's declaration of independence a new poll was conducted and it came out that the emotional reactions to this announced event were leading interviewed people to partially reconsider Serbian relations with the EU.

Actually, the published figures said that 67% of citizens continued to agree with the goal of a Serbian role within the European Union. Nonetheless, 74% believed that any acceleration of the pace towards integration should have been rejected, if the precondition had been the recognition of Kosovo's independence. The uncertainty of the picture was completed by two significant, additional data: two-third of the citizens opposed the potential inclusion of Serbia within NATO, and 60% supported an intensification of the ties with Russia.¹⁵

In a few words, the link established in Serbia between a fragmented international community (I am referring here particularly to the deep divide which emerged in the UN Security Council on the Kosovo issue) and the conflicting domestic beliefs on political/economic/cultural aspirations and territoriality, had a pivotal role in determining a fluctuation of values expectations where the simultaneous attraction/confrontation with the EU coincided with the seduction of Russia and the rejection of NATO.

Serbian elites, European values and the ambivalence of the transition

The experience of the negotiations for the EU Enlargements Eastwards in 2004 and 2007 has stressed to what extent a positive orientation towards reforms and EU values in the elites of a candidate country is a vital prerequisite for making the integration possible. In the case of Serbia, different studies of sociologists and political scientists have analyzed the topic at the local level, focusing on the attitudes of parties, of the Orthodox Church, NGO's and entrepreneurs.

Jovan Komšić, Mladen Lazić, Vladimir Goati, Vesna Pešić, Božidar Jakšić, Vladimir Vuletić and others scholars have extensively investigated the relation between elites' behaviors and European values: most of them came to the conclusion that the contradictory approach to values and "Europeanness" in Serbian elites mirrors the confused post-socialist transition of the country, which has been complicated by the uncertainties related to the state and its territoriality.

Still, we can note that the Serbian elites—as well as public opinion—understand the notion of "Europeanness" and the EU, as a political project, in an unclear way. Particularly nebulous, in their views, are the boundaries between the process of European integration, and the sense of belonging to the European continent and/or the European continental civilization. Definitely, this confusing approach is not a peculiarity of Serbian society; in addition, most of the Serbian elites underestimate the difference between the EU shared institutions and the prerogatives of the EU member-states. As a result, the whole perception of what the EU is, and how it is functioning, remains affected by mystifications, which are consistently mirrored by media and in the political communication. Ultimately, the radical changes which have occurred in the status of Kosovo clearly confirm this behavior.¹⁶ These considerations suggest caution in accepting the simplified thesis, according to which Serbian parties should be analyzed through the lens of a polarization between a liberal/pro-European and a nationalist/anti-European option.

It is a matter of fact, for example, that the Serbian political elites pay a regular tribute to the Serbian Orthodox Church. The Belgrade patriarchate has systematically endorsed nationalist views by emphasizing "Serbianness" and Christianity, their identification with the Great Serbia space, the historical, cultural and religious—although

ambivalently political—heritage of Kosovo, as a manifestation of the love of country.

In spite of the temperate impact that the Orthodox Church has on the population, the interest of policy makers in getting the support of the Church is to a large extent related to the identity crisis of Serbia and its lack of symbols, particularly after the failure of the Union with Montenegro. Actually, the new Constitution of Serbia, passed in November 2006, specifies that Serbia has a flag and a coat-of-arms, but it declines to describe them, while it mentions explicitly the anthem (*Bože Pravde*). Symbolically denoting an erratic State identity, different flags were flying on Serbia at that time; eventually, a new law of May 2009 authorized two flags, one for civil and the other for State use, the latter including a coat-of-arms, which is not in the former. In these circumstances, most of the political elites perceive the Church as a factor that might mitigate the sense of an empty space in terms of State identity and national cultural awareness, since the “European-ness” is not yet understood as a crucial component of the national identity.¹⁷ The manipulation of identities promoted by many intellectuals of humanities in Yugoslavia, and particularly in the 1980s in Serbia, has created a cultural vacuum that political elites even after 2000 think to master by referring to religious values. They therefore advocate attending ceremonies, introducing religion as a school subject, supporting the financial and property claims of the Church without transparency, meeting its high representatives, avoiding any criticism of Church attitudes, even when it justifies or uses violence in order to protect its canon jurisdictions (identified with state borders). In a sense, the development of clericalism in the state institutions has been the price voluntarily paid by policy makers in order to reinforce the values ascribed to “Serbianness” through its sanctification, following the Orthodox glorification of Kosovo as the “Saint Jerusalem,” or—in more general terms—of the “Holy Serbian land” and the “heavenly people.” The paradox of this privileged situation is that the Serbian Orthodox Church is not united, but deeply divided. Tensions have actually emerged among the bishops on the Kosovo issue, on the Montenegrin Church, and other orthodox institutions, with Bishop Filaret expressing statements closer to the Radicals and Bishop Artemije to Koštunica.¹⁸

In spite of that, the “traditional” values endorsed by the Church have become a magnet for a wide spectrum of the political elite, which is still in search for a perspective to establish a convincing (although

ambiguous) balance between national and European values to mobilize consensus in the electorate. Within this indeterminate framework, the general picture of the Serbian political arena and its elites is more intricate than one might expect, far beyond the pro- or anti-European feelings.

Truly, the Liberal-Democrats (LDP) and the Socialists have represented the two extreme sides of a virtual line where pro- or anti-European orientations have marked the Serbian political spectrum in the first decade of the 21st century. Actually, at least declaratively and programmatically, only the Socialists did not see an EU future for Serbia. Speaking in terms of values, they particularly opposed the “unconditioned supremacy of the international law,” with reference to the ICTY and the EU conditionality. Still, this approach did not hinder them from joining the Democrats in a governmental coalition after the elections of May 2008. It remains however to be seen to what extent the programmatic legacy (instead of their recent political “pragmatism”) is going to influence their behavior and their attitude towards the EU and the ICTY in the years to come.

Anyhow, all the other parties have been stunned, in one way or another, by the successful accession to the EU of Romania and Bulgaria, which has been perceived as a palpable expression of Serbian regional isolation.¹⁹ As a consequence, their admission into the EU has contributed to make the European discourse a predominant factor in the Serbian political sphere. Even the Radicals—despite their original negative attitude—have somewhat altered their approach to the EU since 2003, when party president Vojislav Šešelj surrendered by choice to ICTY, and his deputy, Tomislav Nikolić, brought a pragmatic change to the party that gradually led it to consider a prospective relationship with the EU. Leaving aside ideology, and publicly stating that he was not opposing cooperation with the EU, Nikolić restricted this opening to the development of mutual relations on equal terms as with Russia. Meanwhile, he supported behaviors based on more tolerance than in the past; institutional and political fairness; polite manners, which energetically contrasted with the violent legacy of his president; and persisted with the party program in favor of a Greater Serbia. Truly, as a result of that, a deep disparity emerged in the party, a split occurred, and Nikolić ultimately founded his own Serbian Progressive Party (*Srpska Napredna Stranka*) in the fall of 2008.

“Serbianness” and “Europeanness” are both categories included in the programs and hopes of either Tadić’s Democrats or Koštunica’s

Serbian Democrats. Nevertheless, differences concern the preferences respectively ascribed to the former or the latter category. In other words, both the parties see the future of Serbia in Europe, but a deep divide has emerged when, between 2007 and 2008, the two leaders established different priorities to “Serbianness” (predominant in Koštunica) and “Europeanness” (predominant in Tadić) in terms of politics, rather than of values, since both claimed the Serbian belonging to Kosovo.²⁰ At least originally, the contrast between the two leaders has manifested a tactical, but later increasingly strategic, nature.

The party G17+, in its turn, by insisting on values related to social solidarity, accounts settlement with the past, rule of law, justice, as well as regional development, including economic market integration, has outlined a political program oriented to the EU dimension, being in this respect closer to the aspirations of minority parties (particularly in Vojvodina and Sandžak), which are culturally more inclined to support the development of regional bonds and reconciliation.²¹ It is uncontested, in the end, that the most radical positions in support of the EU are reported in the program and public declarations of the LDP. Its young leader, Čeda Jovanović, has repeatedly insisted on a consistent cooperation with the ICTY, a strong commitment to the reforms inspired by the Stabilization and Association process, and a “realistic acknowledgement” of Kosovo’s new status, after 17 February 2008.²² The multifaceted and contradictory attitude in value orientations of the political elite is apparently shared by the economic elites, namely private owners of business, directors and high managers of state enterprises.

Mladen Lazić tentatively made a comparative analysis of the political and economic elites by referring to research conducted in the years 1989 and in the winter 2003/2004 respectively.²³ Finally, Lazić came to the conclusion that, during the period considered, liberal values had not yet achieved a solid, predominant role in the country, despite the radical changes which occurred after the collapse of socialist Yugoslavia and, approximately ten years later, with the ousting of Milošević from power.

According to his data, both of the social groups widely supported freedom of speech in 1989, although significant characteristics of authoritarian morality were persistent, particularly with regard to the supremacy of collective over individual interests. Lazić explained this ambivalence with the coexistence of both a widespread will of freedom (stemming from the atmosphere related to the communist decline),

and the emerging of a strong nationalism, which was again promoting the supremacy of the group interests.

It is worthy of note that, according to Lazić's figures, *both* the political and economic authoritarian-oriented elites were closer to each other in supporting collective rights in 1989: 71.7% and 76.2% respectively endorsed such an opinion. Surprisingly enough, 15 years later, in 2004, the percentage drastically declined among the *political* authoritarian-oriented elite (35.9%), while this decline was less relevant for the *economic* authoritarian-oriented elite (55.6%), despite the widespread belief that liberal values were triumphant in Serbia as well as in the whole world. As a way of confirmation, 48.5% of the liberal-oriented political elite (either radical or moderate) still endorsed collective more than individual rights in 2004, while only 25.9% of the economic liberal elite shared a similar position.

Actually, and beyond ideological interpretations, most of the cadres of the Serbian political elite experienced a drastic replacement in the Fall of 2000. As a result, individual values achieved a new relevance, at least in a dimension not enjoyed previously; after all, only a tiny majority had supported them. By contrast, the economic elite suffered to a lesser extent from the social and economic changes that occurred during the last two decades; although continuity did not exist in their every-day practice and the development of a market economy made the adaptation to the new reality inevitable, the size of the transformation was different, as was its pace as well.

This reasoning led Lazić to conclude that the slow pace in the decreasing of authoritarian values could be explained only with reference to the persistence of uncertainties about the territorial integrity of the State, challenged by Montenegro and Kosovo's issues.²⁴ In other words, the decline of authoritarian values among the elite refers mainly to aspects such as the adoption of democratic rules, the refusal of violence in politics, freedom of speech, rather than the repudiation of nationalist values (as much as nationalism embodies the supremacy of hierarchical, "traditional," collective interests and cultural homogeneity, which are identified with authoritarian values). This picture, nonetheless, appears to be slightly different, when turning from the political and economic elites to the NGO's sphere. In this case the majority of people actively involved in civil society organizations are inclined to support democratic political values, following European patterns accordingly.

It should be said, however, that this preference is larger within NGO members, than among non-NGO members. A comparative investigation on NGO and non-NGO members was conducted between 2003 and 2004 (with 3037 interviewed), with the aim of understanding how close civil society and common citizens are in terms of values orientation, and whether NGO members reject nationalism and traditionalism, by encompassing in this denial a positive assessment of values related to liberal democracy, including the rule of law and the impartiality of justice, the freedom of opinion, tolerance, refusal of violence. Additionally, the research has investigated to what extent economic liberalism and the separation of State and economy were positively considered among those interviewed.

The outcome of the investigation has revealed that a divide actually exists between NGO members and non-NGO members. The majority of the former are, in fact, more likely to accept democratic and economic liberalism, as well as tolerance. The contrary is true for the latter, who are inclined to accept a higher degree of violence, nationalism, and “traditional” values (in terms of authoritarian and patriarchal behaviors, vision of the family’s division of labor to the detriment of the female role, clear priority in supporting male employment, strong attitudes against homosexuals, etc.).

It is worth noting that Lazić commented on this new research by emphasizing how a better level of education prevails among NGO members, who mainly belong to the medium and higher social strata (officials and free lance workers, experts, managers, entrepreneurs, policy makers), therefore predominantly holding a high-school or university instruction, a better economic standard, and a self-understanding as politically “left-oriented.”²⁵ In contrast, non-members of NGO’s are socially characterized by a prevalent low level of instruction (primary schools and secondary education), with a class position of peasants, unskilled or skilled workers, officials and free-lance workers with a lower level of education; in other words, these strata are mainly representing the “losers” of transition and those who suffered the most from the cultural isolation of the country from the late 1980s onwards.²⁶

This social difference has therefore proved to be meaningful in determining the values orientation of the Serbian citizens and NGO members, although this does not mean that a high education leads inevitably to a rejection of nationalism and “traditional” values. On the contrary, a large part of the Serbian intellectuals in the humanities have stood consistently behind the ideas launched by the Serbian Acad-

emy in the 1980s; particularly intellectuals in the fields of philosophy, literature, modern history, history of the Middle Ages and history of arts obstructed any attempt at reconsidering critically nationalism and its values, by insisting on the supremacy of collective (national) interests. Some members, such as Kosta Čavoški, reiterated the use of violence as a key tool for protecting territorial integrity; others elaborated theories that subjugated civic values to “Serbianness,” as Svetozar Stojanović did when he suggested in 2005 a constitutional definition of Serbia as a “Serbian civic state.”²⁷

In conclusion, polls and research studies on Serbia confirm the assessment that Serbian society is deeply divided and extremely uncertain about its own future. Uncertainties belong either to its different elites or to its citizens, originated to a large extent in a tumultuous and contradictory transition, where the relation with the European Union and its values is characterized by both attraction and rejection.

In such a conflicting situation, democratic rules in politics, as well as market economy and private ownership principles are basically accepted and rooted in the consciousness of the different elites, as well as in the consciousness of the majority of the population. This explains why Serbia is internationally ranked and recognized as a democratic country. Nonetheless, authoritarian beliefs still persist in the society. Collective cultures disclose visible roots, either as a legacy of past experiences or because of the reproduction of nationalist values and aims.²⁸ As a result, a mix of liberal and collective values has not yet encouraged a full recognition of individual skills and tolerance. Truly, this ambivalence in values and future political strategies stems not only from the clashing experiences of the Serbian post-socialist transition, but also from opposing legacies in terms of political culture. Self-management, for example, has represented a vital exercise, as it has encouraged social consciousness and positive orientations towards modernization, openness and interaction with the world, the rooting of a secularized society, and a social differentiation.²⁹

A peasant and socialist tradition in promoting the collective life as a crucial tool for “protecting the group” (either the family, or the consistency and legitimization of an ideology or identity) continues to play a key role in homogenization, and therefore in determining the set of values and behaviors of Serbian society.

It should be also stressed that, Serbian society, to a greater extent than the Soviet successor states, but similarly to most of the Yugoslav successor states, had to deal not only with sharp contrasting factors

that made post-socialist transition a radical change *in war conditions*, but also—and differently from the other cases—*under severe international isolation*. Moreover, this isolation was a crucial factor in strengthening the legacy of authoritarian collective cultures (with the aim of protecting the “ethnic nation”) to the detriment of the other legacy, prone to accept and take advantage from the international openness and interactions.³⁰

Indeed, the responsibility for such a dramatic breakdown (particularly in cultural terms) lies mostly on the Serbian leadership of the 1990s³¹; the result was that the society suffered terribly from international sanctions, running the risk of a social collapse because of the harsh impoverishment of the population, while a high level of corruption and criminality led to an intense proximity of state institutions with illegal interests, allowing the latter to take advantage of legal forms.³² In the end, the sense of human insecurity has been amplified and bounded with the State insecurity, which has been simultaneously generated by its involvement in illegal interests and the persistency of undefined, contested territory.

By enduring different perceptions of threats, the reproduction of “traditional” values has been stimulated under the presumption that they will better protect the “group” or the “nation.” Democracy, rule of law, tolerance, rationality, respect of the otherness, market economy, individual entrepreneurship, and private property were therefore challenged by calls for homogeneity, hierarchical orders, appeals to emotions, sharp denials of any diversities (sexual, religious or cultural), leading at least part of the population and of its elites (especially the intellectuals of humanities) to revitalize authoritarian and collective values, giving them again a chance.

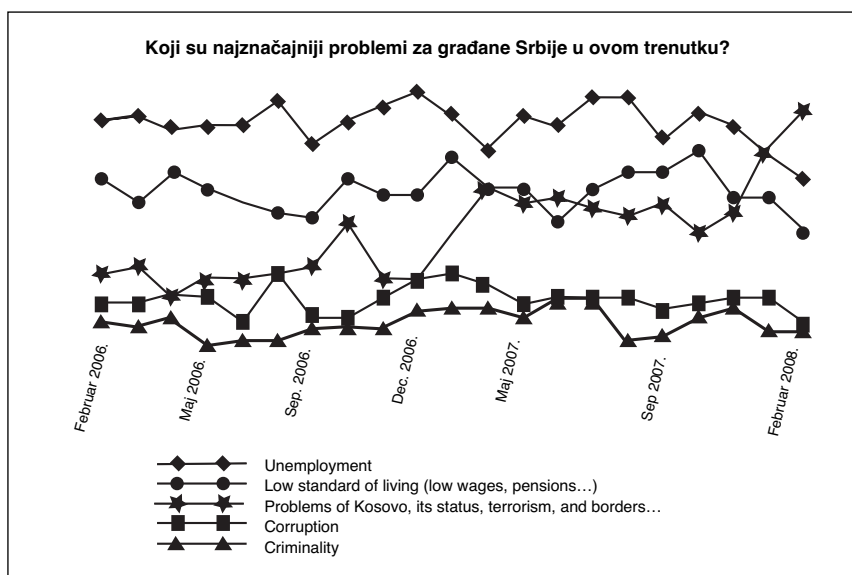
“Odi et amo”: the fragile relation of Serbia and the EU

The multiple sources examined for this research have highlighted how deeply Serbian society is characterized by a simultaneous attraction to the European Union and its rejection. The will to join the EU and the feeling of being steadily vexed and misunderstood by the EU are, in a sense, summarized by the figures according to which 70% of Serbian citizens supported in 2008 the integration into the EU, but 20% only declared that they trusted the EU.³³

As already noted, such a contradictory attitude traces its origins back to the legacies of the past and the controversial transition of the 1990s, finally explaining why the identification of EU values has mainly concerned the improvement of the standard of living, the increasing opportunities for employment and the expansion of international mobility, instead of the development of justice, protection of human and minority rights, tolerance, and multiculturalism.

In this light, interpreting the Serbian political polarization—as it was in the West European and American public opinion when Kosovo’s detachment from Serbia was carried out in 2008—merely as a contrast between a European/liberal and a nationalist (perhaps pro-Russian) option would lead to a misunderstanding of the baffled nature of Serbian transition, where contradictory values orientations dramatically cross all social strata of this country, in a political-cultural atmosphere affected by resentments, reservations, claustrophobia, discontent, and schizophrenic estimations of the reality combined with the perception that there is no viable way out except European integration.

Table 9. What are the most relevant concerns for Serbian citizens in 2008?



Source: Srđan Bogoslavljević, Proevropske snage u prednosti, in “Blic-on-line,” 16 March 2008, at <http://www.blic.co.rs/politika.php?id=34190>.

As a matter of fact, since 2007 the concerns of Serbian citizens have changed drastically; unemployment and the low standard of living — which led the ranking of critical problems in the country — were declining in their awareness and significantly surpassed by the Kosovo issue and borders issue (in March 2006 this problem was ranked as fourth in Serbian concerns; in 2008, it was the first one. See Table 9).

Apparently, therefore, the polls, measuring values orientation in Serbia, have recorded that between 2007 and 2008 nationalist feelings recaptured the general opinion, giving new impetus to the nationalist elites, erroneously restricted by Western journalists and policy makers to the area where Koštunica and the Radicals are predominant.

On the other hand, the reemergence of nationalist values should be regarded differently today from the way they were regarded in 1989, when Milošević was leading Serbia. At that time priority was given to the redrawing of new maps and the EU was regarded just as a mediator. In 2007–2008, on the contrary, Serbian nationalist values were coexisting with the EU as a protagonist of a process of integration, which was formally supported by nearly all Serbian political parties.

This assessment was basically confirmed on 28 April 2008 one day before the signing of the Stabilization and Association Agreement (SAA) between Serbia and the EU; according to the data, 66% of the population endorsed the SAA. Interestingly enough, among the supporters there were all the voters of the LDP, 94% of the DS voters, as well as the 81% of the Socialists³⁴, 45% of the DSS, and the 41% of the SRS voters.

However, when the interviewers raised a specific question by connecting the support for the SAA to the prospect of the visa liberalization, the support picked up to 84%. By contrast, when the SAA was connected to the controversial issue of Kosovo (and the allegation of DSS and the radicals that its signing would mean a recognition of Kosovo independence), the support dramatically declined to 56%.³⁵

As a matter of fact, since the turn of the century, Serbia has not yet accomplished a critical review of its national interests, in consideration of the radical changes which occurred after the collapse of the Yugoslav socialist federation, the failure of the “Great Serbia project” at Dayton, and the vanishing of the Union with Montenegro. By contrast, the rapid evaporation of all these geopolitical arrangements, each of them deeply connected to a specific set of value systems and to a political design,³⁶ has led Serbia to definitely give priority to its territorial integrity, against potential threats from neighboring countries

and domestic secessionist claims, without scrutinizing seriously the magnitude of its recent policies.

As a result, the relation between politics and values orientation differs significantly from the attitudes registered at the end of the 20th century, and gives a new dimension to the issue of territoriality, while the prospect of European integration is not yet perceived in its broader framework, where borders become increasingly meaningless in terms of statehood. On the contrary, the idea of porous borders is still understood in Serbia just as an opportunity of easily crossing them and freely moving into Europe and the world, as it was possible at the time of Tito.

Accordingly, territorial integrity becomes a value in itself, as a decisive factor of stability and security, regardless of the EU approach and/or the exhortation of the most assertive EU member states to realistically accept Kosovo's independence. Although this invitation sounds provocative and/or extremely risky to Serbian nationalists, who are concerned not only about Kosovo, but also about the future of Vojvodina, the Preševo Valley, and the Sandžak, the long term interaction between the resentments (towards EU, Germany, the Vatican, the 1999 bombing) and the weak profile of the perceived EU (as it is mainly identified to Yugoslavia during the Ante Marković's government) contributes significantly in encouraging the 90% of the Serbian political elite (the only exception being *de facto* the LDP) to connect national interests, territorial integrity and the issue of Kosovo, by reshaping and disseminating them into the people as vital values of the country.³⁷

Truly, there is another reason why EU values penetrate with difficulty into the Serbian political cultures. Far beyond the review of "national interests," this reason relies on the fact that the new political majority after 2000 failed to address a cogent critique of Serbian nationalism and nationalist values as such, giving therefore a radical turn to the mainstream political culture of the country.

Actually, the media and the political communication in Serbia (with exceptions) did not absorb, or spread the critical arguments of a broad literature on identity and nationalism that political scientists and sociologists have firmly elaborated since the 1980s.³⁸ Vesna Pešić and Sonja Biserko have critically observed that, among the post-5 October 2000 political leadership, the prime minister, Zoran Đinđić, was the most determined to establish the atmosphere and the conditions for a settlement of the accounts with nationalism and Serbian war responsibilities, not only by handing Milošević over to the ICTY, but also by pro-

moting radical reforms of the police and the army, being aware that he might be killed for this.³⁹

His assassination has actually stopped this hardly initiated process, leaving Serbia in a sort of limbo or in a suspended framework of values and political aims, where an autarchic/irredentist vision of modernity and nation-building process, typical of the late 19th/beginning of the 20th century (sketched out again in the famous Memorandum of the Serbian Academy of Science), coexists with the attractiveness of the European integration processes, which actually represent an innovative (although incomplete) project and a partly post-modern societal design. Meanwhile, the prospect of a wide Serbian State (able to encompass all the Serbian people living in former Yugoslavia) had to be scaled down between 1999 and 2006; since then, these approaches ambiguously mixed with a slightly different national feeling, connected to the territorial integrity of the State: the border between nationalism and patriotism (which is always uncertain) became totally confused in an atmosphere of anti-American, pro-Russian, and dubiously pro-EU emotions. It is worth stressing, however, that the attractiveness of the European integration process has suffered from a decline in Europe and worldwide, since the Constitutional Treaty has been rejected.

In addition, the EU old-member States fatigue of enlargement, as well as the painful, ineffectual and bearish negotiations on both the communitarian budget and in profiling the future of EU deepening, has affected the reliability of the project. By dropping out the *Charter of Fundamental Rights* from the Lisbon Treaty—although the validity of the Charter did not suffer in itself, being formally approved at Nice in 2000 and its legal value included in the Lisbon Treaty—, the authority of the proclaimed European values was symbolically altered in its implications, since the general image of this Treaty has deteriorated by the need of identifying a low-profile accord after the failure of the Constitution.

As a result, the influential capability of its conditionality towards candidate and potential candidate countries was scaled down in significance, while only the too fresh memory of the Yugoslav secession wars and the risk of a wide confrontation with NATO have slackened the pace of further fragmentations in most of the Yugoslav successor states, at least for the time being.

Within this framework, Serbia has been influenced, after 17 February 2008, by the display of a contradictory set of values, thoughts, and resentments, primarily connected to statehood and “Europeanness,”

without a convincing alternative offered by the EU. Furthermore, the European Union, deeply divided in its reaction to Kosovo's formal detachment from Serbia, has emphasized how statehood, borders and national sovereignty are still dominant factors in the policy of EU member states as well, giving good arguments to Balkan nationalists and new impetus to their set of values.

The awkward European management of the Kosovo status issue has undermined the fact that Kosovo's independence is actually a formal proclamation of an already existing EU protectorate. Meanwhile, the Serbian reaction to this event has made palpable the level of bitterness and discontent, inflaming bewildered nationalist/patriotic passions virtually in the whole political arena of the country. On the other hand, however, the divide in the recognition of this independence within and among EU member States has disclosed how the borders issue is still perceived as a politically critical and vulnerable value in the Old Continent, despite its exclusion from the values enlisted in the *Charter of Fundamental Rights*.

The vulnerability of the European integration processes has been highlighted and the pregnancy of the EU offer to Serbia for a rapid inclusion has been weakened accordingly. As a result, the only realistic project able to gradually soften the tensions in the Balkans, namely the prospect of inclusion of all peoples and states of the region into a wider institutional umbrella (the EU) based on political, market and cultural integrations, harmonization of legislations and rules, common currency and a potential common foreign policy, has been deeply affected, since the process of inclusion is proposed to entities (such as Serbia, Kosovo, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Macedonia) whose statehood is finally and simultaneously contested from inside, from some neighbors, and—paradoxically—from EU memberstates, who actually mirror divergent visions on statehood, territory, sovereignty, and “Europeanness.”

How can European values appreciably prevail in Serbia under these conditions, is unlikely to be predicted, but also hard to see, as changes in Serbia do not depend exclusively on domestic and regional dynamics, but also on the European behaviors, on the rationality of its values, and the consistency of its project, jeopardized once again by the rejection of the Lisbon Treaty in the Irish referendum (June 2008).

Notes

- ¹ Dragomir Pantić, “Budućnost tranzicije u Srbiji zavisno od promena vrednosti,” in Grupa autora, *Promene vrednosti i tranzicija u Srbiji: pogled u budućnost*, (Belgrade: Friedrich Ebert Stiftung and Institut društvenih nauka, 2003), p. 14.
- ² Freedom House, *Country Report 2007: Serbia*, at <http://www.freedom-house.org/template.cfm?page=22&year=2007&country=7334> [accessed on 29 May 2010].
- ³ Srđan Bogosavljević, *European Orientation of the Citizens of Serbia: Trends* (Belgrade: Strategic Marketing, June 2007).
- ⁴ This was, by the way, the thesis elaborated by Mihailo Marković in a meeting on “Minorities in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia” promoted by the Serbian Academy in January 1995 when, directly referring to me, he pretended to explain the Greater Serbian project as a way of establishing the Serbian national unity, similarly to Italy and Germany in the 19th century. It was an interesting sophisticated argument, which nonetheless suffered (as I objected) from an inaccurate historical reconstruction of the past, since the Italian “Risorgimento” instead inspired the Yugoslav idea, as well as the variety of South East federal movements of that time.
- ⁵ See the series *Ljudska prava u Jugoslaviji 1998–2007* (Belgrade: Beogradski centar za ljudska prava, 1999–2008).
- ⁶ The ICTY court decision on 3 April 2008 to acquit the Albanian-Kosovar leader Ramush Haradinaj of a charge of war crimes is likely to strengthen such a feeling in the Serbian population.
- ⁷ Igor Bandović (ed.), *Rad Međunarodnog krivičnog tribunala za bivšu Jugoslaviju i domaćih sudova za ratne zločine* (Belgrade: Beogradski centar za ljudska prava, 2005), p. 48.
- ⁸ Beogradski centar za ljudska prava, *Stavovi prema domaćim pravosudnim organima za ratne zločine i Međunarodnom krivičnom tribunalu za bivšu Jugoslaviju u Hagu* (Belgrade: Strategic Marketing, December 2006) at <http://www.bgcentar.org.rs> [accessed on 29 May 2010].
- ⁹ Beogradski centar za ljudska prava, *Stavovi prema domaćim pravosudnim organima za ratne zločine i Međunarodnom krivičnom tribunalu za bivšu Jugoslaviju u Hagu* (Belgrade: Strategic Marketing, August 2004) at <http://www.bgcentar.org.rs> [accessed on 29 May 2010].
- ¹⁰ Compare: Ivana Čvorović and Dragana Vučković (eds.), *Istraživanje o nasilju nad LGBTTIQ populacijom u Srbiji* (Belgrade: Labris – organizacija za lezbejska ljudska prava, 2006), p. 27 with *Ljudska prava u Srbiji i Crnoj Gori 2005* (Belgrade: Beogradski centar za ljudska prava, 2006), p. 344 and *Ljudska prava u Srbiji 2006* (Belgrade: Beogradski centar za ljudska prava, 2007), p. 202.
- ¹¹ *Ljudska prava u Srbiji i Crnoj Gori 2005* (Belgrade: Beogradski centar za ljudska prava, 2006), p. 423.
- ¹² Bogosavljević, *European Orientation of the Citizens of Serbia*.
- ¹³ Strategic Marketing Research and Kipred, *Proces određivanja budućeg*

statusa Kosova, Saznanja, stavovi, praksa (Beograd-Prishtina, 2006), pp. 12 and 22.

- ¹⁴ Compare: European Movement in Serbia, *Javno mnjenje o pridruženju Srbije Evropskoj Uniji*, (Belgrade: StretegiPuls Group, January 2008), a poll conducted among 1041 adults interviewed in Serbia without Kosovo, with Srđan Bogoslavljević, *European Orientation of the Citizens of Serbia*.
- ¹⁵ The poll was conducted by the agency “Politicum” under the request of the Serbian Ministry for Kosovo and Metohija, see “Građani i za Kosovo i za Eu,” in *B92*, 29 February 2008, http://www.b92.net/info/esti/index.php?yyyy=2008&mm=02&dd=29&nav_category=640&nav_id=287076 [accessed on 29 May 2010].
- ¹⁶ As known, the contrast between Tadić and Koštunica that finally led to new parliamentary elections in 2008 was centered on the attitude to take with the EU, as Koštunica was requiring from the European Commission the recognition of the territorial integrity of Serbia by amending the SAA (Stabilization and Association Agreement) as a prerequisite for further cooperation, while the European Commission has no such a prerogative, which belongs to its member states, who were (and are) clearly divided on the matter, since only a number of them has recognized the independence of Kosovo.
- ¹⁷ See Zagorka Golubović, “Može li Srbin da bude ateista: o ekspanziji crkve u politiku i državne institucije,” in *Danas*, 29 April 2003; Evropski pokret Srbija, *Identitet kao osnova tranzicije* (Belgrade: Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, 2004) and the thematic issue “Crkva i država,” in *Nova srpska politička misao, posebno izdanje*, No. 2, 2007.
- ¹⁸ Mirko Đorđević, “Srpska pravoslavna crkva u ciklusu kosovske drame,” in Dragica Vujadinović i Vladimir Goati (eds.), *Nacionalni i državni interes moderne Srbije*, knjiga III (Belgrade: Friedrich Ebert Stiftung-Cedet, 2007), pp. 241–253.
- ¹⁹ Yugoslavia for decades perceived itself as a country more developed and freer than any other in the Soviet camp. This feeling was particularly strong in relation to Bulgaria and Romania. As a result, the inclusion of these two republics in the EU was a political and psychological shock not only for Serbia, but also for Croatia.
- ²⁰ Tadić declared to the newspaper “Standard” in April 2008 that in the event he would have been forced to decide between EU and Kosovo, he would support the protection of national sovereignty, as his primary determination. See: “Tadić: Integritet zemlje najvažniji,” as reported in *B92*, 18 April 2008. http://www.b92.net/info/vesti/index.php?yyyy=2008&mm=04&dd=18&nav_category=11&nav_id=294612 [accessed on 29 May 2010].
- ²¹ Compare extensively on these topics: Jovan Komšić, “Političke stranke u Srbiji i evropske vrednosti—programi i praksa,” in Zoran Lutovac (ed.), *Političke stranke u Srbiji i Evropska Unija*, (Belgrade: Friedrich Ebert Stiftung and FPN, 2007), pp. 9–49; Vladimir Goati, “Državni interes kroz

prizmu opredeljenja vladajućih partija,” in Dragica Vujadinović i Vladimir Goati (eds.), *Nacionalni i državni interes*, pp. 255–271 and, of the same author, *Partijske borbe u Srbiji u postoktobarskon razdoblju* (Belgrade: Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, 2006).

²² See “LDP: za evropsku platformu,” in *B92*, 10 March 2008, reported in http://www.b92.net/info/vesti/index.php?yyyy=2008&mm=03&dd=10&nav_category=418&nav_id=288559 [accessed on 29 May 2010] and Čeda Jovanović, *Moj sukob s prošlošću* (Belgrade: Dan Graf, 2005).

²³ The analysis here is considered as tentative, since the data collected are not fully comparable: the research Lazić referred to actually encompassed in 1989 the whole Yugoslav federation, and in 2003/4 Serbia only. Taking into consideration this significant difference, the notion of “political elite” has been applied to the members of local governments (at the republican, regional and municipality levels), members of the Assemblies and of the political parties (in 1989 restricted to the League of Communists), while the category of “economic elite” was applied to directors of big public enterprises (in 1989) as well as on owners and directors of private firms in 2003/4. More than 200 people have been interviewed for each elite in both the investigations. See Mladen Lazić, “Vrednosne orijentacije političkih i ekonomskih elita u Srbiji,” in Lutovac (ed.), *Političke stranke u Srbiji*, pp. 63–84.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 72–73.

²⁵ It should be remembered that, despite the dictatorship of the proletariat, the Universities in Yugoslavia enjoyed, during the communist period, a wider, and more dynamic environment than the countries of the socialist camp, by developing contacts with the Western world and benefiting, at least in some periods, from a more open space for political and cultural debates.

²⁶ Mladen Lazić, *Promene i otpori* (Belgrade: Filip Višnjić, 2005), especially pp. 99–118.

²⁷ See Aleksandar Bošković, “Nacionalizam kao sudbina: nekoliko stavova srpskih intelektualaca o raspadu Jugoslavije,” in Mirjana Rašević and Zorica Mršević, *Pomeramo granice* (Belgrade: Institut društvenih nauka, 2007), pp. 73–76; Miraš Martinović, “Poraz mišljenja ili izdaja intelektualaca,” in Evropski pokret Srbija, *Identitet kao osnova tranzicije*, pp. 45–48 and extensively about the Academy after 2000 Božidar Jakšić, “SANU o nacionalnim i državnim interesima: Akademija na mlakoj vatri (ne)podnošljive klonulosti,” in Dragica Vujadinović i Vladimir Goati (eds.), *Nacionalni i državni interes*, pp. 215–239.

²⁸ See Bora Kuzmanović, “Autoritarna svest kao ometajući činilac u razvoju demokratskih institucija,” in Grupa autora, *Promene vrednosti i tranzicija*, pp. 123–130.

²⁹ See Dragomir Pantić, “Vrednosti i ideološke orijentacije društvenih slojeva,” in M. Popović, *Društveni slojevi i društvena svest* (Belgrade: Centar za sociološka istraživanja, 1977) and Stefano Bianchini, *Le sfide della modernità. Idee, politiche e percorsi dell'Europa orientale fra XIX e XX secolo* (Soveria Mannelli: Rubbettino, 2009).

- ³⁰ Mario Zucconi, *Gli effetti delle sanzioni economiche: il caso della Serbia* (Rome: CeMISS, 2001); the reactions of the intellectuals of the Serbian Academy are in Kosta Mihailović (ed.), *Sanctions. Causes, Legitimacy, Legality and Effects* (Belgrade: SANU, 1995).
- ³¹ See Serbian analysis as that of Dušan Janjić, *Zapisi iz Srbije* (Belgrade: Draslar Partner, 2006); Slobodan Antić, *Zarobljena zemlja. Srbija za vladu Slobodana Miloševića* (Belgrade: Otkrovenje, 2002), particularly the third chapter on Elite, pp. 355–407; Mladen Lazić (ed.), *Protest in Belgrade: Winter of Discontent* (Budapest: CEU, 1997). In the international literature a stimulating contribution is that of Eric D. Gordy, *The Culture of Power in Serbia: Nationalism and the Destruction of Alternatives* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1999).
- ³² On this topic see extensively Vesna Pešić, *State Capture and Widespread Corruption in Serbia*, (Brussels: CEPS working document), No. 262, March 2007.
- ³³ Srđan Bogosavljević, “Proevropske snage u prednosti,” in *Blic-on-line*, 16 March 2008, reported in <http://www.blic.co.rs/politika.php?id=34190> [accessed on 29 May 2010].
- ³⁴ This figure is quite significant, and helps in understanding why the party’s orientations changed after the elections of 2008 making possible a coalition with the Democratic Party after a trip to Russia by the socialist leader Ivica Dačić for consultations.
- ³⁵ The poll was conducted by Strategic Marketing among 550 adult people. See B92, 30 April 2008, http://www.b92.net/info/vesti/index.php?yyyy=2008&mm=04&dd=30&nav_category=11&nav_id=296423 [accessed in May 2010].
- ³⁶ About values and political projects compare for instance Zagorka Golubović, *Kuda ide postoktobarska Srbija 2000–2005* (Belgrade: Službeni Glasnik, 2006); Dejan Đokić (ed.), *Yugoslavism: Histories of a Failed Idea 1918–1992* (London: Hurst, 2002); Stevan K. Pavlowitch, *Serbia. The History of an Idea* (New York: New York Univ. Press, 2002); Zoran Obrenović, *Srbija i novi poredak* (Niš: Gradina IFDT, 1992); and Branko Petranović and Momčilo Zečević, *Agonija dve Jugoslavije (Belgrade: Svedočanstva, 1991)*.
- ³⁷ Interesting considerations in this regard are those of Vojin Dimitrijević, “Pojam nacionalnog interesa i međunarodni položaj Srbije,” in Dragica Vujadinović i Vladimir Goati (eds.), *Nacionalni i državni interes*, pp. 29–44.
- ³⁸ See Ljiljana Bačević, *In media res. Efekti medija* (Belgrade: Institut društvenih nauka, 2004), particularly p. 67 and pp. 129–138.
- ³⁹ Compare Vesna Pešić, “Nacionalizam nemoguće države. Okvir za razumevanje neuspele legitimacijske tranzicije u Srbiji,” in Dragica Vujadinović i Vladimir Goati (eds.), *Nacionalni i državni interes*, pp. 72 and Sonja Biserko, “Zoran Đinđić i Haški Tribunal,” in Latina Perović (ed.), *Zoran Đinđić. Etika i odgovornost* (Belgrade: Helsinški Odbor za Ljudska Prava u Srbiji, 2006), p. 224.

Orthodox Values and Modern Necessities: Serbian Orthodox Clergy and Laypeople on Democracy, Human Rights, Transition, and Globalization

Klaus Buchenau

Any society needs a certain amount of shared values in order to function. This is true even for individualist and pluralist Western societies, which have reduced the set of common values but insist on so-called core values such as tolerance, justice, freedom, mutual respect, and human dignity. There has never been a catalogue of mandatory western core values, but usually democracy and a respect for human rights are included. From a standard western point of view, globalization and, in the case of post-socialist societies, transition are processes which spread these core values into other parts of the world. Since large parts of the western elites tend to see “their” value model as universal, they view both globalization and transition in a positive way, some criticism of the accompanying economical injustices notwithstanding.

In post-socialist Europe, this universalist model is often challenged by a coalition of religious and secular nationalists. For the purpose of this chapter, I will call them *anti-westerners*, because the West is their principal “other” against which they declare the counter-values. Other value conflicts are harder to detect. This is true in cases where the western core values are accepted in principle but (often unconsciously) modified. Serbian clergymen, who adhere to this current, I will call moderates.

The distinction between anti-westerners and moderates may seem somewhat strange if one keeps in mind what observers usually write about fractions in the Serbian episcopate. They talk about currents and call them the Greek, Serbian, or Bosnian current.¹ The problem with these distinctions is that their relationship with value systems is impossible to define. Between the two world wars, anti-westernism developed most strongly in Serbia proper, i.e., among the “Serbian current,” while during the post-Yugoslav wars it was associated with compara-

tively moderate views. In the 1980s, the “Greek current” (viz., theologians that had studied in Greece) was regarded as anti-western, but presently it is often held as a “pro-European” factor. In post-Milošević Serbia the “Bosnian current” is considered the most anti-western, though the Bosnian clergy has previously played only a minor role in the discourse about the “evil essence” of the West and had nothing to offer but nationalism. This does not mean that the “Bosnian,” “Greek,” and the “Serbian” currents are terms without a meaning. They stand for local mentalities and personal networks, but not necessarily for stable value orientations. When using the terms “westerners” and “moderates,” I do not have in mind a stable circle of persons. Rather they characterize two basically different models of thinking, between which individuals sometimes shift during their lifetime, and between which compromises are possible.

In general, value modification is a normal process since values do not exist as a given “fact.” A value is not a concrete wish, but a notion of what we find desirable. Thus, it is an abstraction; in order to apply it in a concrete situation, we need to interpret it.² If whole nations are to adopt a certain set of values, they will do so much more successfully if the values can be linked to already existing values and to national tradition. By linking, the content of the value may be altered, though to many politicians who talk about “European values” this is not clear.

Some western core values change their content systematically when being transferred into post-communism. There is, for instance, a strong tendency to interpret democracy either as a stage of material welfare or as the dominance of the titular nation, while the accompanying notions of minority rights, gender equality, or tolerance, are less easily accepted. It would be unjust to blame only the post-communist elites for this. The process of EU enlargement was and is directed not only by objective criteria, but also by (geo)political interests. In a situation where the European Union deliberately invites the Balkan countries because this seems to be the only way to stabilize the region, the local elites are tempted to present legal reforms as *social reality*, i.e., as functioning values. But laws and values are not the same. The former can be declared in a political act, but people and their values change at a much slower pace and do not necessarily follow in the intended direction.

In this framework, the Serbian case is quite special. Since the beginning of the 1990s, Serbia has been in an open conflict with western actors such as the European Union, NATO, and the United States. The

value discussion has thus become much more polarized than in other Balkan states. Counter-values are more intensely propagated, and the stimulus to level value differences by a “pan-European” vocabulary is smaller than, for instance, in Bulgaria or Rumania. For their advocates, the counter values give an easy explanation of the roots of the post-Yugoslav conflicts, and they avoid critical self reflection. If Serbia’s values are “good” but endangered by “bad” western values, any detailed discussion of Serbia’s past 20 years must seem dispensable.

The religious aspect is so important because Serbian Orthodoxy is used, or offers itself, as a main source of counter-values. Its theological or historiosophical explanations of Serbian centuries-long suffering and martyrdom are much more authoritative than pamphlets written by secular nationalists. Its views pretend to be rooted not only in national tradition but finally in God’s eternal truth. But it is not only the Church that influences the situation. The overall climate has also left traces within the church. On the one hand, fundamentalist and anti-western currents have become considerably stronger than they historically were. On the other, the perspective of European integration leads theologians to reinterpret the Serbian Orthodox heritage and to prepare themselves for Serbia’s future role within the European Union.

Moderates and Anti-Westerners: Two Serbian Orthodox Value Traditions

When Serbia liberated itself from Ottoman dominance in the 19th century, it began to send its secular elites to study in the West, mainly to Austria, Germany, and later to France. They returned with modernizing ideas, built up European institutions such as a state bureaucracy, a parliament, a modern legislature. Compared to other Balkan states they were not especially quick in transforming society according to the “European standards” then in force, because the liberation of the fellow Serbs in Austria-Hungary and the Ottoman empire was given top priority. The army was considered more important than the school system. But nevertheless the prestige of western modernity was enormous. The new elite perceived patriarchal Serbian society as backward, and looked down upon the Orthodox clergy, which hardly differed from the peasantry in values and lifestyle. The latter had little possibility to argue for counter-values, because it lacked theological education. During Ottoman times, the clergy had lost contact with the

Orthodox intellectual tradition, which could have given them the necessary arguments. In this situation, there were two alternatives—either to stay with the peasants and participate in their violent, but at the same time helpless, revolts against the new European-like state and its bureaucracy, or to catch up with the new elite and make a career. Logically, the emerging Orthodox elite very much resembled the secular educated—they were deeply patriarchal but pragmatic people, worked on a lot of fields simultaneously, and lacked an interest to directly confront “Orthodox” or “European” values. This first generation of educated Orthodox clergymen can be considered the founding fathers of the moderate current, which was intellectually dominant until World War One. To this generation belong people like Josif Cvijović (1878–1957), interwar metropolitan of Skopje and administrator of the SOC between 1941 and 1947, Stevan Dimitrijević (1866–1953), who founded Belgrade’s Theological Faculty in 1920. Gavriilo Dožić (1880–1950), Serbian patriarch between 1937 and 1950, was raised in Montenegro and thus belongs to a slightly different context, but his personal profile is much the same.³

Though most of them were sent to Russian ecclesiastical academies and were considered Russophiles, they hardly brought any particular impulse to Serbia’s post-Ottoman value system. They were usually ardent nationalists and considered themselves democrats. Democracy and national liberation were almost synonymous for them.

In the decades before World War I, the lower clergy became infamous for its addiction to party politics, which they seemingly valued higher than their ecclesiastical vows. A majority of the clergymen supported Nikola Pašić’s Radical Party, which intensively practiced the above mentioned *value modification*. They were Russophiles and monarchists but had no sympathies for autocracy or a sacralized monarchy, and they were absolutely in favor of parliamentary democracy. This was no wonder, since they dominated Serbia’s political scene. According to Serbian historian Dubravka Stojanović, the Radicals identified democracy with the system in which they had the absolute majority. Compromise, individualism, and minority rights were alien to their worldview.⁴

The “Europeanism” of the Serbian clergy mainly followed these lines. They saw themselves not only as democrats, but also as liberals and absolute opponents of clericalism. “Anti-liberalism” and “clericalism” were ascribed to the Christian archenemy in the vicinity, i.e., the Catholic clergy. This judgment is not completely wrong, but it con-

ceals a misunderstanding of both liberalism and clericalism. For the Serbian clergy, liberalism did not mean a conviction that human society shall develop freely and that the individual's freedom is the main goal. Rather it was an endorsement of the fact that the clergy would not play a special role of its own, but be subordinate to the collective will of the state and the national majority. And the Serbian clergy's anti-clericalism did not mean that it was in favor of a separation of religion and politics. Rather it expressed a certain passivity concerning the clergy's pastoral duties. For many, preaching in a church was far less prestigious than holding a speech in parliament. At the same time, the Catholic's pastoral activism and its support of Croatian politics were labeled as "clericalism."⁵

This situation changed markedly in the interwar period. While a large part of the clergy remained faithful to the model described above, an energetic minority began to formulate a civilizational counter-model in which completely different values would dominate. This anti-western current cannot be merely interpreted as a backlash but also as a consequence of modernization. Just as the secular intelligentsia had diversified and become more choosy in its relationship with the West some decades before,⁶ the theologians of the first half of the 20th century were finally educated enough to participate as an independent force in public discourse. Heavily influenced by the spiritual revival in late imperial Russia and Fyodor Dostoyevsky's Orthodox messianism, some members of this new spiritual elite such as Nikolaj Velimirović and Justin Popović began to preach that post-Ottoman Serbia had been on a wrong path in trying to become a modern Western-type democracy. They increasingly identified Western individualism and secularism as evil principles and left no room for value modifications. Rather, they propagated the Orthodox God-man (*Bogočovek*) as the supreme ideal, i.e., a person whose only goal is to come closer and become more similar to Jesus Christ. Instead of accentuating the principal duality between this world and afterlife, between the human and the divine, they stressed man's task to convert completely and to become holy. The way to do so was to subordinate "proud reason" entirely to the church's teachings—and to spiritual authorities such as certain monks who were considered "holy men." Thus, the Orthodox anti-westerners almost completely devaluated the existing secular sphere and its autonomous rules. The only legitimate value system remaining was their own, consisting of a specific mixture of humbleness, asceticism, charismatic leadership, and national pride. The dominant orientations of the secu-

lar leadership were condemned, both liberal and communist sympathies came to be considered as symptoms of Western pestilence.⁷

It would be exaggerated to interpret this anti-western turn as an unavoidable result of God-man theology. The idea of divinization is characteristic for Orthodoxy in general, and not only for stern anti-westerners. It is part of a pan-Orthodox revival, which started in 18th-century monasticism on Mount Athos and Moldavia, reached Imperial Russia in the 19th century, and the Balkan Slavs in the early 20th century. In the theological schools, it appeared as a pedagogical, anti-authoritarian revolution, as a movement against dry learning, which had been typical for the Orthodox academies and seminaries in their “pro-western” period during 17th and 18th centuries. For Orthodox students, used to schematic textbooks copied from catholic and protestant sources, it meant a vivid theology, exemplified not in theoretical formulas but in the lives of “holy men.” It was thus a response to modernization: After a period of pro-western imitation, during which the institutional base for a modern Orthodox education had been laid, the acquired resources (e.g., the improved educational level of the professors, or language skills) were used for searching the particulars of the Orthodox identity. This identity was seen in a theology based on ascetic experience and charismatic example rather than on rational rules.⁸

Some thinkers such as the modernist Greek theologian Demosthenes Savramis consider that the notion of God-man amounts to an optimistic appraisal of the human person, because it means a belief in the possibility of fallen man’s ability to become similar to God again, in contrast to Western Christianity’s (and especially Protestantism’s) stress on that only God’s act of justification and mercy can save the sinner.⁹

However, in interwar Yugoslavia, which was characterized by strong secularist currents in the intelligentsia, growing tensions between the Catholic and the Orthodox Church, and increasing pressure from internal and external anti-liberal forces, God-manhood inevitably turned into a militant concept. For Nikolaj Velimirović it was clear that if man *can* use his freedom in order to live a life agreeable to God, he *must* do so. The fallen, human part of man’s nature did not mean anything to him, so that even some of his sympathizers as the contemporary Belgrade theologian Radovan Bigović criticize Nikolaj’s “monistic” anthropology, which amounts to the “destruction of human personality.”¹⁰

Though some authors consider God-manhood a remedy against national chauvinism because they suppose it to heal man from all secular sins¹¹, in the Serbian situation this effect was very modest. The anti-westerners increased pan-Orthodox solidarity and introduced Samuel Huntington's "Clash of Civilizations" *avant la lettre*. At the same time they produced a new quality of nationalism by describing Serbian national history as a pursuit of holiness. Velimirović and Popović believed that their ideal Christian society had largely been realized in medieval Serbia, and that it had led the Serbs through centuries of the Ottoman yoke.¹² Secular historians were horrified by this kind of "historiography" that ignored much empirical evidence. They feared that the anti-westerners might introduce clericalism, which the former fiercely denied. For the influential historian Stanoje Stanojević for example, just as for many representatives of the moderate clergy, modern Yugoslav society could be derived from Serbia's liberal, democratic traditions. He saw medieval Serbia as one of the most developed civilizations in Europe, thus as a proof of Serbia's Europeanness. He interpreted the Middle Ages rather in terms of political power and development rather than of religiosity, what led to fierce polemics with the anti-westerners.¹³

From the analyst's point of view, it is important to note that not only the pro-western value modifiers were subject to foreign influence. The same is true for the anti-westerners, all their claims of autochthony notwithstanding. Without the above mentioned Russian influence, which was intensified by a wave of White Russian émigrés after World War One, the formulation of Orthodox counter-values would have hardly been possible. The anti-westerners considered the Orthodox monasteries to be the model and nucleus of their God-man society—but the Serbian monastic tradition had almost completely died out in Ottoman times. It was revived by religious Russian émigrés for whom the "Bolshevik catastrophe" had become a mighty impulse of religious transformation. The most venerated monks of interwar Yugoslavia were in fact Russians. In their monasteries they created an atmosphere of concentrated spirituality; it greatly differed from most Serb-led monasteries, where monks led a rather secular life, which often included relationships with women, smoking, and alcohol.¹⁴

During the socialist period, the official church was dominated by the moderates. Unlike the early Soviet Union, Tito's Yugoslavia did little to create a "socialist wing" within the Church. The new leader-

ship instead concentrated on finding clergymen ready for compromise with the new order; especially the two patriarchs brought into office during socialism (Vikentije Prodanov, 1950–1958, and German Djorić, 1958–1990) were instrumental for that purpose. By constantly stressing patriotism and the clergy's role in Serbia's wars of liberation, they found a niche in Tito's Yugoslavia for which national liberation was a most central item, too. The visible church, i.e., the hierarchy, the ecclesiastical schools, the church press, was maintained and rebuilt thanks to their flexibility and compromises which included respect for the fast development of the country under Tito. At the same time, this current bore a lot of the responsibility for the rapid secularization of Serbian society. Many priests were lenient in their pastoral activities and instead accepted subsidies from the state; others completely quit their profession and integrated into the secular mainstream as teachers, Red Cross employees and so on.¹⁵

The anti-western current was suppressed, but nevertheless persisted in some rural areas. Justin Popović, who was confined to a monastery in Western Serbia, became the central figure of a dissident movement within the church. He had far-reaching ideas about Titoist Yugoslavia. Just as many Russian émigrés he saw communism as a variant of western rational thinking, brought in from Western Europe in order to destroy the historical identity of the Orthodox peoples. During the delegitimation of the Titoist regime in the 1980s, this current became extremely popular, while the hierarchs from the mainstream were qualified as "collaborators" with the fading regime.¹⁶ This, as well as the western opposition to the Serbian national project, greatly contributed to popularity of the anti-western current in the following two decades.

In the Bosnian War from 1992 to 1995, the anti-westerners heavily backed Radovan Karadžić who was considered a true Orthodox leader committed to the construction of a theocratic society. The moderates defended the Serbian position by using a rather ordinary political vocabulary, i.e., they stressed that the Serbs had a right to self-determination and portrayed the Serbs' war as self-defense in order to avoid another genocide as had happened during World War Two in the Independent State of Croatia.¹⁷

At the same time the anti-westerners, whose most prominent representatives were the metropolitan of Montenegro and the Littoral Amfilohije Radović and the bishop of Zahum-Herzegovina Atanasije Jevtić, justified the Serbs' struggle by turning the rules of discourse upside

down. For them, the Croat and Bosniak enemies were just minor allies of the evil West and thus of minor significance. Backed by rightist émigré intellectuals, they stated that it was the United States and the whole West that was behind the war, trying to subjugate the Balkans into the “New World Order.” In this alleged strategy, the Serbs were declared the main enemy because of their state-building Orthodox tradition, which prevented them from subordinating to the new synthetic, materialist, Americanized, and unified world culture. Since both communism and western secularism were portrayed as a constant war against God and the Christian Serbian tradition, the real war going on in former Yugoslavia was considered an inevitable reaction and a better state than “perfidious peace.”¹⁸

Value conflicts in post-socialism

After the fall of the Milošević regime in October 2000, the Serbian Orthodox value discourse continued in a considerably changed environment. First of all, the fault lines of discourse have changed. During the late Milošević years, the Church had increasingly backed the democratic opposition against the dictator, so that the value differences between secular liberals and Orthodoxy were somewhat blurred. Both liberal democrats and clergymen considered Milošević an ugly remnant of communism. His use of police against demonstrators, the ties with mafia structures, and the techniques of manipulating elections and public opinion were hated by both sides. But besides that, the Yugoslav dictator was criticized for completely different things. The Church attacked him for losing all of Serbia’s post-Yugoslav wars and for exploiting the Orthodox heritage while continuing “atheist” politics. He was reproached for his reluctance to allow religious education in schools, Orthodox chaplains in the army, and restitution of church property expropriated after the Second World War. The liberals accused him of having started the wars, for populism, and xenophobia.

The most ardent supporter of the opposition was Kosovo’s bishop Artemije Radosavljević. Theologically an adherent of the anti-western current and a fierce opponent of ecumenism, he was convinced that Serbia needed a positive image in the world in order to retain Kosovo; he was aware of Serbian war crimes in the province and believed that only functioning democratic institutions could make Serbia attractive for the Albanian population. After the end of the NATO bombings in summer 1999 his cooperation with the opposition went so far that he

even called for Milošević's extradition to the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia in The Hague.¹⁹

This orientation soon declined in the aftermath. Bishop Artemije initially hoped that the NATO-lead Kosovo Force (KFOR) would defend the Kosovo Serbs, their property and cultural heritage more effectively than Milošević's police had done. Since 1997, he had witnessed the Serbian forces fighting against UCK fighters and civilians alike, thus spreading anti-Serb resentment in the Albanian population. Artemije's confidence in the International Community has proven half-illusory. KFOR has been unable to prevent the exodus of about two-thirds of Kosovo's Serbs, and during the international protectorate more than 150 Orthodox sacral buildings have been destroyed or demolished. The contacts with Western diplomats and politicians he established in the late Milošević era proved useful for international lobbying afterwards, but not influential enough in order to change the West's determination to give preference to the Albanian majority. The bishop reacted with frustration and increasingly returned to Belgrade's nationalist politicians as a possible ally.²⁰ The example of Bishop Artemije shows two things—first, that adherents of the anti-western current are able to change and do not necessarily pursue fundamentalist anti-western policies. Anti-pluralist convictions, as for example Artemije's absolute belief that *all churches* besides the Orthodox are heretical, can coexist with pro-western *realpolitik* and the propaganda for a democratic society.²¹ Secondly, that *criticism of the West* is not the same as *anti-westernism*.²² Bishop Artemije differentiates well between his theological critique of the western confessions and politics. His objections in the political field are based on the perception that the West does not act according to its own standards in Kosovo; the standards as such are not criticized.

In Serbia proper, the overthrow of the Milošević regime deepened the conflict between the Serbian Orthodox Church and the pro-European intellectuals. Having lost Milošević as common enemy, they fight each other with great vehemence. While the latter call the SOC nationalist, anti-European, fundamentalist, and sometimes even clerico-fascist, the former answer by naming the latter traitors, cheeky brats of Europe (*evroslinavci*) and by "excommunicating" their opponents from the Serbian nation. Both sides consider that the opponent is a remnant of communist times. For the Orthodox, the liberals continue the communists' alleged attempt to destroy the Serbs' Orthodox identity. For the liberals, the Orthodox perpetuate communist collectivism. And

both sides consider each other to be heirs of communist totalitarian, intolerant thinking.

While the church hierarchy and the political establishment of the pro-western parties try to temper their moods, the battle is quite brutal between the NGO-scene and the Orthodox youth organizations. On both sides of the fronts one finds people of the same generation (mainly born in the 1960s and 70s), with a similarly high educational background. During the late Milošević years, some of them were friends and fought together against the regime. Then, the rift between the religious and secular orientation was not considered unbridgeable, now it increasingly is.²³

This development comes as no surprise. From the late 1980s, the reform communist and liberal intelligentsia saw the return of nationalism as a relapse far behind the cosmopolitanism they had developed in Titoist Yugoslavia. For them, the logical continuation of Yugoslavia's liberal traits was European integration, and the nationalists both in the regime and in the opposition were seen as a tremendous threat to that dream. Recalling the "Serbian liberals" of the early 1970s, they were convinced that nationalism had been one of the main obstacles for Serbia's inner development for more than a century. The European Community itself confirmed this vision by identifying Serbia and the insurgent Serbs of Krajina and Bosnia as the main aggressors. Thus the liberals, best symbolized by the intellectuals of the Belgrade circle, became the most stable supporters of the West. They intensively worked for the exposure of Serbian nationalism, its mechanisms, traditions and actors. Inevitably, they became highly critical of the Serbian Orthodox Church. Though religious faith as such was not at stake here, eventually any form of Orthodox religiosity was suspected because it seemed that in Serbia, religiosity and nationalism are indivisible.²⁴

The consequences of this split are grave. While religious intellectuals in other post-socialist countries understand themselves as a part of civil society, in Serbia this seems impossible. Thus, the term "civil society" has been loaded up ideologically, i.e., it has little to do with the real existing society as such, where people meet and unite around the goals that bother them. Rather it is a political ideal of the NGO scene. Though some theologians discuss a possible role of Orthodoxy in civil society, the NGO's do not invite them to participate in the discourse. There is some responsibility of the West for this development, because after the Kosovo war it has promoted civil society as a framework for anti-nationalist re-education. As the Austria-based anthropol-

ogist Jelena Tošić has pointed out, Serbian human rights organizations are quite reluctant to listen what really bothers the people. They decidedly concentrate on Serbian war crimes and “ideological decontamination” but neglect the economic problems, which are central to ordinary citizens.²⁵

For the promotion of human rights and civil society it is essential that its advocates learn to place these concepts into the local context and adapt it in tune with the needs of the population. In this process the Church might become important. It enjoys a high degree of confidence in Serbian society²⁶ and could potentially function as a “translator” of European ideas to Serbia. In accepting this idea one has to be clear about the fact that any Orthodox “Europeanism” will function along the model of value modification, i.e., an adaptation and re-interpretation of a given value.

If we can historically differentiate the moderate and the anti-western current, maybe we can do the same for the present. In the following I will try to examine the chances of dialogue by outlining the Church’s position towards human rights, democracy, globalization, European integration, and the church-state relationship.

Human rights

Generally speaking, the Serbian Orthodox Church is torn between two poles. The anti-western perception is that human rights are a concept typical for western anthropocentrism, while Orthodoxy with its striving for God-manhood tends to stress man’s task of transformation that has nothing to do with rights—in fact, religious turnovers often happen in times of crisis where the most elementary human rights are endangered. For the critics in the Orthodox camp, granting rights to secular people means justifying their sinfulness; a person who has separated himself from God’s plan for salvation thus cannot claim rights.²⁷ In this view, human rights lead mankind away from its true destiny, viz., transformation into altruistic, ascetic personalities.

On the other hand, the Church thinks in oppositions of *freedom* and *slavery* (*ropstvo*), always preferring the first. This position is derived from Serbian historical experience with its long centuries of foreign domination. The Church stresses freedom of the national collective rather than personal freedom. The latter is supported in general and derived from the freedom of choice, which is seen as an ontological characteristic of the human being, but implicitly limited by the

notion that this freedom should be used for fulfilling God's commandments.²⁸

If one compares Orthodox discourse in current Russia and in Serbia, one difference is striking. While leading Russians theologians strongly tend towards the anti-western position and question the human rights concept as such,²⁹ the Serbian Orthodox Church has evaded a systematical discussion, despite its close contacts with the Russian Church. Serbian bishops implicitly accept the human rights concept and make use of it, especially when they criticize human rights violations of the Serbs in Kosovo, or in Serbia proper during the NATO bombings. In this context, they usually talk about Serbs who lost their homes and property, about the killed and the raped, about the Serbian minority in Kosovo, which cannot move without risking their lives.³⁰ In a typical act of value modification, they use the human rights concept in order to defend national interests. This is quite problematic, but for a dialogue on human rights this seems to be less grave than the Russian position, which challenges the human rights in principle.

It is worth mentioning that some Orthodox intellectuals such as Gordana Živković work on the theological affirmation of human rights. The result is, again, a modification. Živković asserts that the existing catalogues of human rights are an initial base for further discussion, and that some very central things such as the person's right to love and be loved cannot be guaranteed by any legal declaration. She argues that Orthodoxy gives a very solid ground for harmonizing individual freedom and societal cohesion—the human being was created as an image of God, so that it shares God's freedom but has a “common ground” with others on account of the common origin. Since God created our differences as well, pluralism is also affirmed. Živković sees the human rights declared by the West as a fig leaf used to disguise political hegemonism, when in reality western rationalism poses a constant threat to pluralism because it subordinates people to the machine of modernity.³¹

Central for the Serbian human rights discourse is the country's cooperation with the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY). In the eyes of the human rights' activists, Serbia cannot prove its commitment to human rights unless it cooperates with the tribunal. The Serbian Orthodox Church harbors similar reserves towards the tribunal as large parts of the population, but nevertheless Serbian bishops have called upon prominent indictees to surrender on several occasions. This does not necessarily mean that they have

changed their position towards the tribunal, which they consider partial towards the Serbs.³² But it bears witness to a certain consciousness that cooperation with the ICTY is indispensable for any progress in the country.

Democracy

In the post-Milošević period, there has been a remarkable tendency to rehabilitate the Serbian collaborationists of the Second World War, i.e., General Milan Nedić and his government and Dimitrije Ljotić's fascist Zbor movement. The main force behind this process is Vojislav Koštunica's DSS which tries to unite the Serbs around a romantic and nationalist version of anti-communism.³³ Both Nedić and Ljotić considered themselves Orthodox politicians and wanted to implement the commandments of faith into an integral Christian society. Both were fiercely anti-modern and anti-democratic, and especially Ljotić was an ardent anti-Semite.³⁴

The anti-western current within the Church has sympathies for this rehabilitation, but it is far from undisputed. Strong forces in the clergy and laity are not willing to reintegrate Ljotić into the gallery of "good Serbs," because they cannot forgive him his attempt to turn Orthodoxy into an instrument of Zbor ideology.³⁵ This mirrors historical reality quite well. The already mentioned metropolitan Josif Cvijović, who led the SOC during the German occupation, was very critical toward Zbor. Therefore, he cannot possibly be labeled a Nazi collaborator, as he was called in the 1990s.³⁶ Ljotić's ideal of an "organic" society, where the political parties are to be replaced by a representation of the various professions, is still discussed in the Orthodox youth organizations and among Zbor veterans,³⁷ but not in the mainstream, which considers itself democratic. Even here, the multiparty system is not held in high esteem, because it is blamed for splitting the people. Theologians consider it alien to Orthodox self-understanding, which is centered on liturgical unity, which brings different people together rather than partitioning them. But the mainstream is far from outlawing party democracy or proposing an alternative system but would rather modify it by installing Orthodoxy as an arbitrator and spiritual inspiration above all parties, thus realizing democracy as a community and not as a society.³⁸ This understanding is not completely in tune with Western European notions of democracy and is not compatible with a clear separation of Church and State. Nevertheless these are the

Church's own ideas about democracy. Changing more, at least in the moment, is possible only if one excludes the Church from the discussion, which means diminishing the domain of civil society. This could also strengthen the anti-Westerners who criticize the Serbian bishops for their "illusory" belief in democracy.³⁹

For the pro-European liberals, the "traditional" recognition of democracy is simply not enough. They insist that democracy in a modern sense cannot be built up on collectivist notions that "the people" is the sovereign, and that it needs conscientious and responsible *citizens*.⁴⁰ This is absolutely true, but it would be unjust to claim that nobody in the Church bothers about civic development. There are theologians who derive the democratic individual from Orthodox notions of a God-given, unique personality, and who use a theological argumentation in order to turn the "voter-subject" into a "voter-citizen." (However, in doing so, they usually arrive at the idea that the religious citizen is badly represented in Serbian liberal discourse which is afraid of Orthodoxy as a public religion.⁴¹)

The issue of democracy has been highly disputed in practical politics. This is especially visible in the discussions about the Law on the Churches and Religious Communities passed in April 2006. The Serbian Orthodox Church behaved along the convictions of the moderate current—i.e., it did not try to reinstall itself as a state church but insisted that its merits for Serbian identity and statehood be recognized. Besides that, it successfully managed to build a tactical "coalition" with the other so-called traditional religious communities of the country, which had already been officially recognized in interwar Yugoslavia (i.e., the Catholic Church, the Islamic and Jewish communities, the Slovak Evangelical Church, the Reformed Christian Church, and the Evangelical Christian Church). All these religious communities receive a privileged status under the new law, are entitled to a simplified registration procedure and can organize religious education in schools. The other religious communities are subject to a more complicated registration procedure and may organize religious education only outside the school system.⁴²

For the pro-European NGO scene, this law and the Serbian hierarchy's engagement for it were a clear sign of "clericalism," "anti-Europeanism" and backwardness.⁴³ This opposition was due to principal differences, but also to the political style the Church adopted during the drafting process. Indeed, it negotiated behind the lines with the ministry of religion but avoided public discussion. The same was true

for the ministry. Led by the Orthodox intellectual Milan Radulović, it understood itself as a promoter of the traditional religions and especially Orthodoxy, rather than as a mediator between the Churches and society.⁴⁴

However, for some outside observers the situation looks different. Surely there is a big difference between Serbian law and legislation in France or the United States. There is neither strict laicism as in France, nor an equidistance of the state toward the religious communities as in the US. Nevertheless, within the existing plurality of church-state relationships that the European Union explicitly allows, it is a viable possibility. German Protestant theologian Heinz Ohme considers that this model is understandable if one takes into account Orthodoxy's role for the identity formation of the many Balkan people. And he reminds us that the Serbian law is significantly more modern than the Greek legislation, where the Orthodox Church has remained a state church in spite of the country's membership in the European Union.⁴⁵

The Serbian discussion clearly shows that it is not only the church that interprets and modifies "European values"; the same is true for its liberal opponents who interpret the separation of Church and State in more radically than many Western European countries. If one takes into account the high degree of religious intolerance in the 1990s, the cooperation of the Orthodox and Catholic Church during the drafting process of the law means clear progress, which should not be neglected.

Similarly disputed was and is religious education in schools, which was introduced in 2001. Many liberals consider it to be incompatible with a European orientation. But here again, the "European model" can hardly serve as an argument because many European states have confessional religious education. Besides that, in Serbia the subject has been introduced in a rather soft form, viz., the pupils choose between religious and civic education. An empirical study conducted among Serbian pupils of all grades in 2002 indicates that both subjects are quite popular. Many respondents said that they like the new subjects because of the relaxed atmosphere in the classroom, the free climate of discussion, and the absence of grading. In this sense both civic and religious education can be seen as a contribution towards the democratization of the Serbian school system which otherwise is traditionally characterized by ex-cathedra teaching and learning by heart.⁴⁶

But there are factors that make the criticism of both religious legislation and religious education understandable. There is a lot of mistrust that the Church might misuse the legal framework in order to

promote an integralist Orthodox concept of society. Since the Serbian Orthodox Church has not undergone any self-critical debate about its anti-modern tendencies in the first part of the 20th century, these fears are not without a base. In his Christmas message in January 2002, Patriarch Pavle for instance criticized atheist parents that they “hustle their own offspring to the ways of false happiness and false freedom,” and that they “ruin their children’s lives.”⁴⁷ On a similar note, Bojan Aleksov in his fieldwork detected cases where Orthodox clergymen declared the alternative subject—civic education—to be a dangerous sect.⁴⁸

Globalization

While democracy and human rights both have their advocates and critics within the Serbian Orthodox Church, globalization is generally equated with a liberal-capitalist world of anonymous consumers directed from the United States of America. This homogeneous negative attitude is rooted in the intellectual traditions of both the anti-western and the moderate current. The anti-westerners follow the ideas of the Serbian right of the 1930s and 40s, and thus they interpret actuality through the prism of interwar radical conservatism and anti-Semitic conspiracy theories. The moderate current lacks these clear schemes, but judges on the basis of typical provincial fears that the small Serbian people will be deprived of their right to defend a particular collective identity. In a post-colonial attitude they mistrust the great powers of the world that dominate the smaller nations and allegedly deny them a development of their own. Since these two positions are not too far from each other, in practice one often finds a mixture of both.

In the Orthodox public opinion, the radicals largely claim the issue for themselves. Besides their interwar authorities, they draw a lot of inspiration from the Russian discussion, where the Church as such takes a stance against globalization. At the same time they criticize the Serbian hierarchy for being too passive. Right-wing sociologist Zoran Milošević for instance believes that after the fall of Milošević, the bishops have yielded to pressure by the new pro-western rulers and since then have been silent on globalization.⁴⁹

In times of crisis, as after the Kosovo Albanians’ declaration of independence in February 2008, the anti-globalist discourse spills over into official documents of the Church. In their Easter message for 2008 the bishops call on every Serb to dedicate his work and prayers to the

defense of Kosovo, which is portrayed as the anchor of national identity. According to the bishops, the Kosovo values represent everything a Serb should fight for, i.e., heroic faith and a preference of heaven over earth, while globalization is just the opposite:

Our dear spiritual children, we live in hard times, of globalization, in a time were the most basic human rights are spurned—man's right for life, the child's right to be born, the parents' right to educate and lead their children, the mother's right to be a caring mother and wife, a human being's right to be a human being! A monstrous globalist civilization is being created according to the criteria of a degenerate morality, without the yeast of the eternal meaning of human life. Such a civilization cannot survive as long as it is in opposition to resurrected Christ and his mild teaching. Keeping this in mind, let us be wise and careful when we approach the unhealthy table of offerings of this world. Let us take from it only what is valuable for Christ and corresponds to our dignity and vocation. We shall renounce everything pseudo-civilizational, corrupt and inhuman, just as Christ rejected the offer of the tempter on the hill of temptation: if you bend to me, all you see shall be yours!⁵⁰

Thus, it seems that the Serbian Orthodox Church might become a main bearer of anti-globalism. During the late 1990s, this discourse was mainly promoted by the Milošević regime. While the Orthodox anti-westerners basically followed the same line and explained the post-Yugoslav wars in terms of a worldwide anti-Serb conspiracy,⁵¹ others refrained from using this language because they felt that it was used by the regime in order to destroy internal opposition. Now the barrier has disappeared. There is a real possibility that the Church might continue the old regime's discourse because it feels frightened by the new, direct exposure to western and global trends.

But this development is by no means inevitable. The Orthodox commonwealth is divided on the question whether globalization means western political and cultural hegemony or a culturally neutral phenomenon, which simply implies a more rapid and intense exchange of people, goods, and ideas. The well-established patriarchies are rather conservative in this matter. This is especially true for Russian and Serbian Orthodoxy whose "canonical territory" is endangered by the dismemberment of the Soviet Union and socialist Yugoslavia. While these churches tend to interpret the breakup as a globalist attack against faith and nation, the breakaway Churches in the Ukraine and in Montenegro assess the global age as a chance—just as the nationalisms

behind them see the West as an ally against Russian (respectively, Serbian) hegemony.⁵²

If one asks how realistic the Serbian Orthodox assessment of globalization is, one comes to ambiguous results. On the one hand, it can hardly be denied that a country like Serbia is not a global player but among those countries which will have to play by the rules of the more powerful. For many young Serbs, globalization is a synonym for “good life,” and they want Serbia to adapt to it as quickly as possible.⁵³ Even for open-minded parents, the tastes and demands of their children may seem all-too uniform. All this amounts to the fact that fears of global unification are not limited to the Orthodox.

On the other hand, the panic discourse on globalization has aroused fears that Serbian collective identity might be lost, and this has actually supported the religious revival. Orthodoxy has become attractive even for the urban youth. This is a clear sign that in times of globalization, the church has better possibilities to reach people than ever. Its skills in internet communication etc. improve constantly, and there is a whole generation of young educated clerics who make ample use of this technology in order to broadcast their message.

The results of this development are quite impressive and can be compared to the growth of the Orthodox intelligentsia in the 1930s, which was inhibited by the Second World War and subsequent socialism. Now, chances for self-realization have greatly improved again. In contrast to the economy, which is dependent on a stable environment, religion flourishes in times of insecurity. The best example is the monastic revival in Kosovo, which continues all difficulties notwithstanding. While the majority of secular civilians have left the province since 1999, Bishop Artemije’s young, urban, and mostly educated monks and nuns have remained. Because of them, the image of Serbian Kosovo is more Orthodox than ever. They seem like living proof that only a monastic civilization is strong enough to resist all threats and difficulties.⁵⁴ The Serbian Orthodox experience is thus, at least partly, in tune with theories which assert that globalization is accompanied by a deprivatization of religion,⁵⁵ that it reconstitutes the world religions as meaningful cultural systems and undermines western hegemonism,⁵⁶ and that religion becomes important both as a factor of personal experience and of revived nationalism.⁵⁷

However, very few people in the Church follow western sociological thought, so it is no wonder that this picture of globalization has remained largely unknown in Serbian Orthodox circles. Instead, glob-

alization is often equated with *globalism* as an ideology and with the *New World Order* as a western conspiracy against all non-western cultures. For the Serbian Orthodox Church, globalization is nothing but the framework of what is perceived as a systematic anti-Serb policy of the West during the last twenty, if not sixty years. It feels like a loser in the fight against of globalization, in contrast to other religious communities with a stronger international organization and self-understanding. Nevertheless, it is possible that once the post-Yugoslav dis-integrations have come to an end, the Church will come to a more realistic assessment.

Transition

This would mean not only to acknowledge the new possibilities that globalization offers, but also to assess its social risks. Just as other Orthodox churches, the SOC has no developed literature on social ethics. It has few ideas about how to maintain social justice in a world of global capitalism and leaves this question to the rather weak alter-globalization movement. By criticizing globalization from a national rather than from an economic perspective, it encourages nationalist and not social responses to it.

Nevertheless, the Serbian Orthodox Church has some beliefs, which could become the nucleus of a social teaching. Before the Second World War, Serbian priests made efforts in supporting the peasants whom they wanted to maintain as the sociological basis of the Serbian nation. Therefore, priests were active in organizing farmer cooperatives and in teaching modern techniques of agriculture.⁵⁸ The ongoing social differentiation of society was looked upon with discomfort, and there was a strong stance against urban and industrial development. At the same time many priests showed by their behavior that they were functioning along modern secular values. They increasingly preferred urban parishes because they offered better incomes and a more vivid cultural surrounding; for the underdeveloped countryside, it was quite difficult to find priests.⁵⁹

In post-Milošević Serbia the agricultural base is sociologically quite narrow, so that the anti-westerners' idea of installing an organic, patriarchal peasant society looks completely obsolete. Nevertheless, it is propagated actively by the Orthodox youth organizations, most of whose members stem from urban households.⁶⁰ The more moderate Orthodox thinkers leave aside these past utopias and concentrate their cri-

tique on neo-liberalism. Both sides refer to Nikolaj Velimirović's interwar "Middle system," an economic conception derived from medieval Serbian monasteries, which advocates a combination of private and community property. For the priest and theologian Radovan Bigović this concept is relevant even today because it evades the extremes of socialist collectivism, which delivers the individual to the totalitarian state, and neo-liberalism, which leads to unhampered egoism.⁶¹

European integration

Concerning Europe, the Orthodox moderates and the anti-westerners have different (though related) core positions. The moderate argumentation usually points out that medieval Serbia was among the most developed countries of Europe. It stresses the high culture of the Serbian nobility, the developed law system, and the religious tolerance. In arguing so, the moderates imply that only the Ottoman "yoke" separated Serbia from Europe and that a return into European structures is self-evident. The anti-western argumentation also refers to medieval Serbia but points out that it was a part of the Orthodox world and already then opposed to the West. The interwar founding fathers of this current, Nikolaj Velimirović and Justin Popović, equated Europe and the West. Their "Europe" was the carrier of the bad, anthropocentric principle, the home of proud, rationalist mankind whose sinfulness they blamed for the catastrophes of the 20th century. The link that unites both positions is the idea of European decline—i.e., the idea that by accepting secularization, the Western Europeans have betrayed their own ideals of a Christian civilization. In 2005, the abbot of the Studenica monastery Tichon (Rakičević) put it this way: "Surely we are a part of Europe. We are a European culture and a European people, in the sense of what Europe should be like. Europe should have spread Christianity, but then happened what happened. Step by step, Europe renounced Christianity."⁶²

During the wars in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina the anti-western view of Europe became a driving force in Orthodox discourse. However, from the second half of the 1990s, when Europe was increasingly seen as a potential ally in getting rid of Milošević, this rhetoric decreased and gave way to a more diplomatic assessment. Obviously many church leaders understood that the Church can do more for its people if it uses a moderate language, if it tries to explain its position

rather than condemn others. As a consequence, the radical voices, especially from the laity, were controlled more strictly and partly ousted from the central church press. They kept on working on their own publications or found a new home in the Orthodox youth organizations. In the post-Milošević period, the church has generally continued that path. It follows the majority of the population and does not try to block Serbia's rapprochement with the European Union. Rather, it uses its diplomatic contacts with Western European representatives of Catholicism and Protestantism in order to create more understanding for the Serbs' view of the recent past and present.

That does not necessarily mean that the moderate views prevail. The fundamental anthropological criticism of Europe has not diminished, but has been kept on a high level, nourished by the ongoing conflicts between Serbia and the European Union. Consequently, the anti-western and the moderate current often merge into a symbiosis. This tendency can be detected as well in the hierarchy as well as in the radical Orthodox margins. In autumn 2005, the activist of the Orthodox youth organization *Dveri*, Vladan Glišić, published an article in which he stated that the "small" Serbian people were so heavily weakened by the wars that they could not afford another confrontation with a world power. Therefore, Glišić recommended EU integration as inevitable. He charged that the Orthodox should find ways in which the interests of the Serbian people could be most effectively defended within Europe. As a goal, he specified that the Serbs should enter the European Union as a community united by national Orthodoxy, but not as atomized "citizens of Serbia" who would immediately become victims of western consumerism. Another reason for self-defense he saw the possible entry of Turkey into the Union, a step that would demographically endanger the small nations of Eastern Europe. Glišić affirmed Serbia's Europeanness from its medieval beginnings but added that the Serbs should not participate in the numerous alterations, which the Europeans had introduced since then. He charged the Serbs to follow their economic medieval model where the economic profits were used for religious endowments; Western Europe's insistence on a liberal market economy he considered to be an aberration from "true" European traditions and a consequence of American pressure. In order to return to its core value of a "moderate, harmonic capitalism," Europe should destroy the system of globalized economy. Glišić affirmed democracy but complained about the Europeans' insistence on party democracy, which he considered to be an outdated model. On the

juridical system he commented that medieval Serbia already had possessed a developed law, but that Europe had perverted the idea of law by instituting the Hague Tribunal. The *acquis communautaire*, i.e. the corpus of European law every future member state has to adopt, Glišić appraised as a sign of decadence: "The more a society turns into a zoo where people avoid each other, the more standardization you need. (...) Such a community can exist only in easy circumstances, but every minor shock can make it fall apart." Eventually Glišić recommended the Serbs should enter the European Union but keep a cool attitude toward it. In the event of its breakup, the Serbian elites should maintain the option to leave it.⁶³

Bishop Ignatije Midić's variant of Orthodox (anti-)Europeanism sounds more moderate, but structurally represents a similar mixture. At a conference on "Christianity and European Integrations" in Belgrade in 2003, he derived European unity from the liturgical experience of the Orthodox Church. The Christian faith, Ignatije asserted, has at its core the belief that God's realm will come. When it arrives, all nations will gather around Jesus Christ. As long as it is forthcoming, Christianity expects believers to be tolerant toward others who are seen as brothers and potential servants of the heavenly realm to come. Bishop Ignatije thinks that especially Orthodox liturgy symbolizes integration without leveling differences: "Orthodox liturgy means to assemble around a bishop just as around Jesus. In this assembly there will be "neither Greek nor Jew, bound nor free. Instead, all are equal in front of the Lord. But there are sinners and righteous in this assembly—and because of this it is an image of the forthcoming Kingdom of God. And if the liturgical event is central in the life of Orthodox believers (...), the integration of different people and cultures should be something absolutely normal, though not ideal, for them."⁶⁴

At the same time, Bishop Ignatije feels highly uneasy about European reality. He states a basic design fault in western European society beginning with Saint Augustine whom he holds responsible for the development of religious individualism. Since then, says the Bishop, social problems have been amassing—between individuals, between persons and institutions, between the individual and the collective. Individualism in his view leads toward the negation of fellow human beings, and a society comprised of egocentric individuals will reflect this characteristic and develop collective egoism: "Behind the western endeavor to control the whole world, there is fear of others and their freedom." For Bishop Ignatije, the 1999 NATO war against Yugoslavia

is exemplary for western unwillingness to accept cultural difference. Orthodoxy's message to Europe he sees as just the opposite—it has the potential to lead Europe to real unification. In order to achieve that, western understanding of man has to change at the core, and Europe must come closer to the Orthodox concept of personality (*ličnost*), i.e., to a notion where the contradiction between the individual and the community is neutralized by “unity in diversity,” by common striving for God-manhood.⁶⁵

Conclusion

Bishop Ignatije does not mention the option of leaving the European Union, but from his rhetoric it becomes clear that his liturgical idea of Europe is very remote from Europe as it actually exists. In liturgy, there are different people, righteous and sinful, but they are all united by the same faith. In Europe, this is not the case and maybe will never be. Still there is a hope that by enhancing the Orthodox factor within the EU, a general impact of the Orthodox worldview might be felt. Converts from Western European countries, though marginal in numbers, nourish these expectations too. But all hopes will prove illusory if the majority of secular Europeans simply prefer to go on living as before. Then, Serbian Orthodoxy's “Europeanism” is likely to re-transform into open condemnation of the West, into enforced block building with other Orthodox churches, or self-isolation.

However, there are other possibilities, too. One of them is ecumenism, especially with the Catholic Church. The Catholic Church has some similar tendencies and much common ground in theology but is rooted in Western Europe. Already now, it has started to function as an intermediary between the SOC and secular European institutions. Under Catholic influence, some of the anti-Westerners such as Metropolitan Amfilohije Radović seem to have changed their core notions about the evil essence of proud Western mankind, and have started to draw a distinction between “good” anti-secular and “bad” secular Europe. This does not necessarily mean that Amfilohije can currently be called a “pro-westerner”—the metropolitan's views remain remote from a liberal view, but at least he has found a channel of communication into the West.

In an ideal scenario, this development might help to bring about a detachment of God-man theology from nationalism and misanthropy, and encourage a rediscovery of Orthodox personalism and optimism.

In any case, Western religious diplomats have to be very careful because ecumenism is highly disputed within Serbian Orthodoxy and has even caused a schism called “old calendarists.”

What about the future prospects of the moderate current? If one compares contemporary Russian and Serbian monasteries and parishes, there are striking differences in habits. Sociologists of religion have noticed that Serbian society has de-secularized since the late 1980s, and that the average believer today is more urban, more educated, less traditionalistic and more conscious about his faith.⁶⁶ This new milieu shows a clear stance against “pagan” admixtures, and instead considers God-man philosophy as crucial to the Orthodox identity. The Serbian Orthodox “counter-modernization” initiated at the beginning of the 20th century is thus continuing.

Besides this new religious culture, some secular characteristics remain quite constant. The Russian monk Roman (Matjušin), who visited Serbia during the NATO bombings in 1999, expected to find not only a heroic but also a deeply religious people and was disappointed. Coming from a country where the convinced believers often form a subculture with distinct dress and behavioral code, he found the Serbs rather secular and westernized. He noticed not only the “alienated” liberal intelligentsia, but also lax discipline in shortened liturgies, believers unwilling to kiss his hand, and smoking priests.⁶⁷ His account fits my own comparative observations between Serbia and Russia too, and it is strikingly similar to reports of Russian travelers in the 19th and early 20th century.⁶⁸ Thus, despite all polarized discourse, the rift between the religious and secular Serbs seems bridgeable if one takes an outside look. In the past, this closeness between believers and non-believers has often facilitated joint action for the national cause. However, maybe it can be useful for European integration, as well.

Notes

- ¹ Zoran Majdin "Sveti arhijerejski sabor: U susret raskolu," in *Vreme* No. 907, (22 May 2008) at <http://www.vreme.com/cms/view.php?id=633273> [accessed on 1 August 2008].
- ² Hans Joas, "Die kulturellen Werte Europas: Eine Einleitung," in Hans Joas, Klaus Wiegandt (eds.), *Die kulturellen Werte Europas* (Frankfurt a. M.: Fischer, 2005), p. 15; Karl-Heinz Hillmann, *Wertwandel: Ursachen, Tendenzen, Folgen* (Würzburg: Carolus-Verlag, 2003), pp. 56–57. 160ff.
- ³ The profile of these clergymen is derived from the following (auto-)biographies: Josif Cvijović, *Memoari* (Cetinje: Svetigora, 2006); Zorica Peleš, *Prota Stevan Dimitrijević: Andjeo Božji za Južnu Srbiju: Romansirana biografija* (Belgrad: Partenon, 2001); Radmila Radić, *Život u vremenima: Gavrilo Dožić (1881–1950)* (Belgrad: Institut za noviju istoriju Srbije, 2006).
- ⁴ Dubravka Stojanović, *Srbija i Demokratija 1903–1914: Istorijska studija o 'zlatnom dobu srpske demokratije'* (Belgrad: Udruženje za društvenu istoriju, 2003), pp. 116–117, 129, 133, 147, 225.
- ⁵ See Stefan Dimitrijević's remarks on the matter as cited in Peleš, *Andjeo Božji za južnu Srbiju*, p. 118. Many Serbian analysts have been following the interpretation that the SOC is anti-clericalist *per se*, see Zoran Milošević, "Zašto u Srpskoj Pravoslavnoj Crkvi nema klerikalizma," in Gordana Živković (ed.), *Čovek i crkva u vrtlogu krize: Šta nam nudi pravoslavlje danas* (Niš: Gradina, 1993), pp. 77–83; Nikola Žutić, "Diktatura kralja Aleksandra i Rimokatolička crkva 1929–1934 godine," in Hans-Georg Fleck and Igor Graovac (eds.), *Dijalog povjesničara-istoričara*, vol. 2 (Zagreb: Friedrich-Naumann-Stiftung, 2000), pp. 503–520.
- ⁶ Ljubinka Trgovčević, *Planirana elita: O studentima iz Srbije na evropskim univerzitetima u 19. veku* (Belgrad: Istorijski institut, 2003), pp. 242–243.
- ⁷ Paradigmatical for this line of thought are Justin Popović's *Svetosavlje kao filozofija života* (New York: Svečanik, 1953), and Nikolaj Velimirović's "Srpski narod kao teodul," in Nikolaj Velimirović, *Sabrana dela*, vol. 5 (Düsseldorf: Srpska pravoslavna eparhija zapadnoevropska, 1977), pp. 653–684. Both texts were written during World War II, the outbreak of which both authors ascribed to Western sinfulness.
- ⁸ Karl Christian Felmy, *Diskos: Glaube, Erfahrung und Kirche in der neueren orthodoxen Theologie: Gesammelte Aufsätze* (Erlangen: Lehrstuhl für Geschichte und Theologie des christlichen Ostens, 2003), pp. 82–103, 250–316.
- ⁹ Demosthenes Savramis, *Zwischen Himmel und Erde: Die orthodoxe Kirche heute* (Stuttgart: Seewald, 1982), p. 36.

- ¹⁰ Radovan Bigović, *Od svečoveka do bogočoveka: Hrišćanska filosofija vladike Nikolaja Velimirovića* (Belgrad: Društvo Raška Škola, 1998), p. 385.
- ¹¹ Vladeta Jerotić, *Duhovni razgovori* (Belgrad: Ars Libri, 2005), p. 81.
- ¹² See Justin Popović's comments on nationalism in "Tajna ličnosti mitropolita Antonija," *Bogoslovlje* (Belgrade) Vol. 4, No. 1 (1939): 47–48. Velimirović, "Srpski narod kao teodul"; Popović, *Svetosavlje kao filozofija života*.
- ¹³ See Stanoje Stanojević's book about Saint Sava, the founder of the first autocephalous (independent) Serbian archbishopric in 1219 (*Sveti Sava*, Belgrad 1935), and the highly critical review written by Orthodox literary critic Milutin Devrnja (*Svetosavlje*, Vol. 4, No. 4 (1935), pp. 39–40).
- ¹⁴ About the influence of Russian monasticism see Rudolf Prokschi, *Ein neuer Aufbruch bei den Nonnen in der Serbischen Orthodoxen Kirche im 20. Jahrhundert* (Würzburg: Augustinus-Verlag, 1996); and Archbishop Antonij (Medvedev), *Nemnogoletniy starets: Žizneopisanie Amvroziya Mil'kovskogo* (1952) at <http://www.russian-inok.org/books/nemnogo.html>. The reality of interwar Serb monasticism has not yet been examined in literature but can be observed through the documents of the Yugoslav ministry of Faiths (Ministarstvo Vera) between 1919 and 1929 (*Arhiv Jugoslavije*, fond 69, boxes 131–139, 182).
- ¹⁵ Klaus Buchenau, *Orthodoxie und Katholizismus in Jugoslawien, 1945–1991: Ein serbisch-kroatischer Vergleich* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2004), pp. 253–264.
- ¹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 342–349, 377–391, 401–406.
- ¹⁷ Radmila Radić, *Patrijarh Pavle: Biografija* (Belgrad: Tanjug, 2005), pp. 43–106.
- ¹⁸ Radoš M. Mladenović and Jerodjakon Jovan (Čulibrk) (eds.): *Jagnje Božje i zvijer iz bezdana: Filosofija rata: Zbornik radova s drugog bogoslovsko-filozofskog simposiona u dane svetih Kirila i Metodija*, (Cetinje: Svetigora, 1996); and Marko S. Marković, *Pravoslavlje i novi svetski poredak* (Belgrad: Obraz, 1994).
- ¹⁹ RFE/RL NEWSLINE Vol. 3, No. 149, Part II, 3 August 1999 at <http://www.rferl.org/newsline/1999/08/4-SEE/see-030899.asp>, [accessed on 3 May 2008].
- ²⁰ Klaus Buchenau, *Kämpfende Kirchen: Jugoslawiens religiöse Hypothek* (Frankfurt am Main etc.: Peter Lang, 2006), pp. 193–207.
- ²¹ Artemije (Radosavljević), *The Serbian Orthodox Church Vis-à-Vis Ecumenism* (Talk presented in September 2004 at the conference "Ecumenism: Origins, Expectations, Disenchantment" in Thessaloniki, at http://www.orthodoxinfo.com/ecumenism/artemije_thess.aspx [accessed on 22 May 2008]. A similar mixture is represented by Artemije's former secretary Sava (Janjić) who is known for his absolute rejection of ecumenical dialogue but also for his advocating of a secular dialogue with

- the Kosovo Albanians (Buchenau, *ibid.*); Sava (Janjić), *Ekumenizam u vreme apostasije* (Prizren: Sveti Knez Lazar, 1995).
- ²² Holm Sundhaussen, "Pro-und antiwestliche Diskurse und Identitäten in Südosteuropa," in *Südosteuropa-Mitteilungen* (Munich) vol. 45, No. 2 (2005), p. 24.
- ²³ Boško Obradović, "Novo omladinsko doba, Uz američke skele ili kroz dveri sprske," at <http://www.dverisrpske.com/brojevi/bilteni/bilten2.htm> [accessed on 15 August 2005].
- ²⁴ See the overall picture of Serbian nationalism drawn in Nebojša Popov (ed.), *The Road to War in Serbia, Trauma and Catharsis* (Budapest–New York: Central European University Press, 1998).
- ²⁵ Jelena Tošić, "Jenseits des Scheindilemmas Nationalismus vs. Reformdemokratie? Globalisierung und Menschenrechte in der Transition Serbien und Montenegros," in Johanna Riegler (ed.), *Kulturelle Dynamik der Globalisierung: Ost- und westeuropäische Transformationsprozesse aus sozialanthropologischer Perspektive* (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2005), pp. 121–152.
- ²⁶ See the results of a public opinion survey published in *Danas* (Belgrade), 17 January 2005. 22% of the interviewed stated that the Orthodox Church was the most trustworthy institution in Serbia. Next came the president of Serbia and the army, with 10 percent each.
- ²⁷ Nebojša M. Krstić, *Raspeto Srbstvo*, vol. 1 (Audio-CD of a lecture given in 2001 at Engineer's Faculty of the University in Belgrade). Here, Krstić equates human rights with value destruction and the rehabilitation of paedophilia and sectarianism.
- ²⁸ Bogoljub Šijaković, "O odnosu Crkve i države danas" (Lecture given in Berlin, 28 April 2007, available at <http://www.spc.yu/Vesti-2007/04/28-04-07-c.html#sij> [accessed on 22 May 2008], since this chapter was finalized the website has been updated to <http://www.spc.rs>). The Orthodox metropolitan of Sarajevo Nikolaj (Mrdja) stated in June 2007 that all human rights could be derived from Christian faith (*Nachrichtendienst Östliche Kirchen* at <http://www.kirchen-in-osteuropa.de/archiv/07061404.htm#7> [accessed on 22 May 2008]).
- ²⁹ Metropolitan Kirill (Gundjaev), "Human Rights and Moral Responsibility" *Représentation de l'église Orthodox Russe à Strasbourg* at <http://www.strasbourg-reor.org> [accessed on 24 May 2006].
- ³⁰ See bishop Artemije's statements about the Kosovo Serbs on January 12 2007 ("Serbs Remain in Kosovo" *Interfax News* at <http://www.interfax-religion.com/?act=news&div=2467> [accessed on 23 May 2008]).
- ³¹ Gordana Živković, "Crkva i ljudska prava i slobode," in *Pravoslavljje* (Belgrade) No 945-946 (1 August 2006), <http://www.pravoslavljje.org.yu/broj/945-946/tekst/crkva-i-ljudska-prava-i-slobode/> since this article was writitng the website has been updated to <http://www.pravoslavljje.org.yu> [accessed on 26 May 2008].
- ³² Besides bishop Artemije's 1999 call for Slobodan Milošević to surrender, bishop Grigoriје and metropolitan Amfilohije have called on Radovan

Karadžić to go The Hague voluntarily. On bishop Grigorije see Dejan Anastasijević, "Srbija i Hag, Sazrevanje o vojničkoj zakletvi," in *Vreme* (Belgrad) No. 747, 28 April 2005 at <http://www.vreme.com/cms/view.php?id=414039> [accessed on 22 May 2008]; on metropolitan Amfilohije see "Vladika Amfilohije pozvao Karadžića da se preda," *BBC Serbian*, at http://www.bbc.co.uk/serbian/news/2005/08/050825_amfilohije_times.shtml [accessed 3 May 2008]. When Karadžić was finally captured in July 2008, metropolitan Amfilohije did not argue against the extradition but supported Karadžić symbolically. He visited him in jail in Belgrade, shrove him and offered him the Lord's Supper. During an Orthodox youth assembly in Montenegro Amfilohije compared him with other national heroes such as Karađorđe and stressed that true Serbs always had to sacrifice themselves in the name of a higher truth. *Enovosti* at http://www.enovosti.info/stampaj/sr/opcija/btg_novosti/5/6552/Amfilohije/pricestio/Radovana [accessed on 18 August 2008].

- ³³ Olivera Milosavljević, *Potisnuta istina: Kolaboracija u Srbiji 1941–1944* (Belgrad: Helsinški odbor za ljudska prava u Srbiji, 2006), pp. 7–12.
- ³⁴ Slobodan Đ. Kerkez, *Društvo Srbije u Drugom Svetskom Ratu 1941–1945* (Niš: Centar za balkanske studije 2004), pp. 331–350.
- ³⁵ See the polemics between the well-known nationalist priest Velibor Džomić and the Zbor supporter Svetomir Paunović in the journal *Pogledi* (Kragujevac) in 2004 at <http://www.pogledi.yu/id.php3?id=505&kat=22>; and <http://www.pogledi.yu/id.php3?id=498&kat=%C7%DB%D0%DD%E6%D8> [accessed on 15 February 2008]. Since this chapter was written the website has been changed to <http://www.pogledi.yu>.
- ³⁶ See the claims made by Ljubica Štefan, *Srpska pravoslavna crkva i fašizam* (Zagreb: Globus, 1996); and Philip J. Cohen, *Serbia's Secret War: Propaganda and the Deceit of History* (College Station, Texas: Texas A&M University Press, 1996), pp. 32–33, 82. Both authors draw their evidence of the SOC's "fascism" from the press of the occupational regime, and do not take into account the omnipresent censorship and manipulation. About Metropolitan Josif's real attitude towards Ljotić and fascism see *Memoari*, pp. 213–221. The metropolitan wrote his memoirs after the war, but they are more than a self-justification. The German occupation forces drew pretty much the same picture and generally held that the Church leadership as well as the majority of the clergy did not "collaborate well." See the report on the SOC by the plenipotentiary of the German Foreign Office for the Southeast, Belgrade, 24 February 1944 (*Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amtes*, Berlin, Inland I D, 13/1-11, R 98822).
- ³⁷ See the journal *Srpske organske studije* that appeared between 1999 and 2004, or the works of Nebojša M. Krstić, who led the rightist youth organization *Obraz* until his death in 2001 (Nebojša M. Krstić, *Pobediti ili nestati: Ogledi o srbskom putu i antisrbskim bezpucima* (Belgrad: Rivel Ko, 2000).

- ³⁸ Gordana Živković, *Crkva i kriza političke zajednice* (Belgrad: Centar za hrišćanske studije, 2006); Gordana Živković, *Srbi i pravoslavlje* (Belgrad: Evropsko slovo, 1998), pp. 50–51 64, 80; Radić, *Patrijarh Pavle*, p. 123.
- ³⁹ Krstić, *Pobediti ili nestati*, pp. 136–137.
- ⁴⁰ Pavle Rak, “Isus je mlad i jak!” in Svetlana Lukić and Svetlana Vuković (ed.), *Peščanik FM: Zašto se u crkvi šapuće?* (Belgrad: Fabrika knjiga, 2005), pp. 86–93.
- ⁴¹ Živković, *Crkva i kriza političke zajednice*; Radovan Bigović, *Crkva i društvo* (Belgrad: Hilendarski fond pri Bogoslovskom fakultetu SPC, 2000) p. 267.
- ⁴² Luka Ilić, “On Inter-Church Dialogue in Serbia: Current Situation,” in *Religion in Eastern Europe* (Elkhart, IN), Vol. 37, No. 3 (August 2007), pp. 60–64 available online at http://www.georgefox.edu/academics/undergrad/departments/soc-swk/ree/2007/ilic-1_dialogue-serbia.pdf [accessed on 23 May 2008].
- ⁴³ Drasko Djenovic, “Serbia: Religion Law Rushed Through Parliament,” in *Forum 18 News*, 21 April 2006 at http://www.forum18.org/Archive.php?article_id=766 [accessed on 23 May 2008].
- ⁴⁴ Radulović’s intellectual profile is illuminated by his monograph *Modernizam i srpska idealistička filozofija* (Beograd: Institut za književnost i umetnost, 1989). Large parts of the book are dedicated to Justin Popović and Nikolaj Velimirović whom the author venerates as great philosophers and possible inspirators for the contemporary intellectual.
- ⁴⁵ Heinz Ohme, “Religionsfreiheit und Religionsgesetzgebung in Europa und Serbien” (lecture at a conference on Church-State relations in Serbia, Berlin, 28 April 2007, <http://spc.yu/Vesti-2007/04/28-04-07-c.html#rel> [accessed on 23 May 2008].
- ⁴⁶ Slavica Maksić, “Mišljenja roditelja o verskoj nastavi i građanskom vaspitanju u osnovnoj školi,” in Snežana Joksimović (ed.), *Verska nastava i građansko vaspitanje u školama u Srbiji* (Belgrad: Čigoja štampa, 2003), pp. 60–61; Snežana Joksimović, *Mišljenja učenika o verskoj nastavi i građanskom vaspitanju u srednjoj školi*, in *ibid.*, pp. 88–89.
- ⁴⁷ Radić, *Patriarch Pavle*, p. 148.
- ⁴⁸ Bojan Aleksov, *Veronauka u Srbiji* (Niš : JUNIR, 2004), pp. 41–42.
- ⁴⁹ Zoran Milošević, “Ruska Pravoslavna Crkva i globalizacija,” in *Sveti knez Lazar* (Prizren), No. 3/51 (2005): 111.
- ⁵⁰ SPC at http://www.spc.yu/sr/vaskrsnja_poslanica_2008_godine [accessed on 28 April 2008].
- ⁵¹ Two main works of Orthodox anti-globalism during the Milošević era are Marko S. Marković, *Pravoslavlje i novi svetski poredak* (Belgrad: Obraz, 1994), and Radoš M. Mladenović, Jerodjakon Jovan (Čulibrk) (eds.), *Jagnje Božje i zvijer iz bezdana: Filozofija rata: Zbornik radova s drugog bogoslovsko-filozofskog simposiona u dane svetih Kirila i Metodija* (Cetinje: Svetigora, 1996).

⁵² The Montenegrin Orthodox Church was founded in 1993 and is backed by Montenegrin Nationalists. The traditional patriarchies consider it uncanonical and avoid contact with it. Its main goal is to drive the Serbian church out of the republic. Montenegro possessed quasi-autocephaly between the 17th/18th century and the end of World War One, when Montenegro became part of Yugoslavia and its Orthodox Church was integrated into the re-erected Serbian patriarchy. Since then, Montenegrin Orthodox Church has been divided into those loyal to Serbia and Montenegrin separatists (*zelenashi*). In post-socialism, the Montenegrin nationalists finally acquired the possibility to set up a church of their own. In their propaganda against metropolitan Amfilohije (Radović), who remains loyal to the patriarchy of Belgrade, the new church as well as Montenegrin politicians make ample use of Amfilohije's nationalist past, his relationship with Karadžić and other suspected war criminals. For the position of the Montenegrin Orthodox Church towards the West and Catholicism in particular see the interview of Metropolitan Mihailo in Nedjeljna Dalmacija (Split/Zagreb), 18 August 2000, *Montenegrin Orthodox Church* at http://www.moc-cpc.org/saopstenja/intervju_L.htm [accessed on 15 March 2006].

The Ukrainian Orthodox Autocephalous Church was created in 1921 and reached an autocephalous status in 1924. After the Second World War it was forcefully integrated into the Patriarchy of Moscow, but survived in the North American emigration. It returned to the Western Ukraine in the late 1980s, where its presence is disputed by the patriarchy of Moscow. For its social ethics see Victor Yelensky, "Globalization, Nationalism, and Orthodoxy: The Case of Ukrainian Nation Building," in Victor Roudmetof, Alexander Agadjanian and Jerry Pankhurst (ed.), *Eastern Orthodoxy in a Global Age: Tradition Faces the 21st Century* (Walnut Creek etc.: Alta Mira Press, 2005), pp. 160–161.

- ⁵³ Miroslava Malešević, "Are there Nations on Planet Reebok? Local vs. Global Identity among Young Serbs," in *Ethnologia Balkanica* (Munich) vol. 7 (2003): 184; Tošić, "Jenseits des Scheindilemmas," pp. 146–147.
- ⁵⁴ Bishop Artemije (Radosavljević), "Kosovo u duhovnoj i istorijskoj perspektivi Srpskog naroda," in *Sveti Knez Lazar* No. 3/51 (2005): 15–24.
- ⁵⁵ Roland Robertson, *Globalization: Social Theory and Global Culture* (London: Sage, 1992).
- ⁵⁶ José Casanova, "Religion, the New Millennium, and Globalization (2000 Presidential Address)," in *Sociology of Religion* (Washington, DC), Vol. 62, No. 4 (2001): 430.
- ⁵⁷ Peter Beyer, "Privatization and Politicization of Religion in Global Society, Implications for Church-State Relations in Central and Eastern Europe," in Irena Borowik (ed.), *Church-State Relations in Central and Eastern Europe* (Krakow: Nomos, 1999), pp. 21–25.

- ⁵⁸ Predrag Puzović, *Srpska pravoslavna crkva: Prilozi za istoriju 2* (Belgrad: Hilendarski fond pri Bogoslovskom fakultetu SPC 2000), p. 253.
- ⁵⁹ Klaus Buchenau, *Der Aufstieg der Antiwestler, Orthodoxe Modernisierung und Elitenspaltung in Serbien, 1850–1941* (forthcoming 2008).
- ⁶⁰ Krstić, *Pobediti ili nestati*, p. 39.
- ⁶¹ Vera Vratuša-Žunjić, *Razvoj, religija, rat* (Beograd: Institut za sociološka istraživanja filozofskog fakulteta, 1995), pp. 62–90; Bigović, *Od svečoveka do bogočoveka*, pp. 329–331; Zoran Milošević, “Ekonomska misao Svetog vladike Nikolaja-novog prosvetitelja srpskog,” in *Srpske Organske Studije* (Beograd), No. 3 (2000): 253–262.
- ⁶² Archimandrite Tihon (Rakičević), “Ravnoteža Istoka i Zapada,” in *Dveri Srpske* (Belgrad) No. 3 (2005): 22.
- ⁶³ Vladan Glišić, “Izazovi evropske integracije za srpski identitet,” in *Dveri Srpske* No. 3 (2005): 11–15.
- ⁶⁴ Ignatije Midić, “Pravoslavlje i Evropa,” in Radovan Bigović (ed.), *Hrišćanstvo i evropske integracije* (Beograd: Hrišćanski kulturni centar, 2003), pp. 40–41.
- ⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 43–46.
- ⁶⁶ Mirko Blagojević, *Religija i Crkva u transformacijama društva. Sociološko-istorijska analiza religijske situacije u srpsko-crnogorskom i ruskom (post)komunističkom društvu* (Belgrad: Filip Višnjić, 2005).
- ⁶⁷ Hieromonk Roman (Matuškin), *Tam moja Srbija: Putevye očerki: Stichi raznykh let* (Saint-Petersburg: Aletea 2005, pp. 19, 29; for an outline of contemporary Russian religious culture, see Nikolai Mitrokhin, *Russkaia pravoslavnaia tserkov’: Sovremennoe sostoyanie i aktual’nye problemy*, (Moscow: Slavica, 2004).
- ⁶⁸ Andrej Šemiakin, *Russkie o Serbii i serbach* (Saint-Petersburg: Aletea 2006).

The Social Values of Serbian Youth

Nebojša Petrović

On the eve of the disappearance of the Socialist Federated Republic of Yugoslavia and the outbreak of war, Belgrade's Institute of Social Sciences published the results of a comprehensive study of young people, under the title, *Children of Crisis*. Instead of moving toward resolution, the institute found, the crisis had become worse and even unbearable, and indeed, the most recent years had seen a change in people's perception, so much so that earlier years, which they had viewed as a crisis at the time, now seemed to them to have been a *belle époque*. During the war years (1991–95), no further research was conducted on the opinions and attitudes of youth.

In the transitional period (transition from a state of war and destruction to stable democratic society), even the titles of books that dealt with problems of youth typically sounded an alarmist tone; some examples include “in the claws of transition,” “lost in transition,” “betrayed expectations,” and “sacrificed generation.”

What an odious difference in comparison with the previous generation of young people in Josip Broz Tito's Yugoslavia, a generation that was proclaimed to consist of those who will “lead our country into a bright future.” Of course, a great part of the proclaimed policy toward young people in socialist Yugoslavia was merely the regime's propaganda, in a country strictly led by the “old guard” (*stara garda*) of communist Partisan veterans from the Second World War. The younger generation had been strictly controlled by regime—even the Students' protest in 1968 ended with applause for President Tito's speech and the *Kozaračko kolo* (the most popular dance at communist celebrations since the end of the war). However, in the late 1970s and during the 1980s, a new critical mass movement of young people arose, and was mainly expressed through rock music. Rock groups from the new wave movement, and later some of the biggest rock bands such as

Azra and *Riblja čorba* challenged the “eternal” regime’s truths with their critical and intelligent verses. Their influence was very strong due to their popularity, their LPs were sold in hundreds of thousands of copies, and their sardonic rhymes were sung in concerts in all parts of Yugoslavia. “Do something for your consciousness, do not stand shilly-shally”¹ and similar verses peeled from thousands of throats.

Two decades later, at the Belgrade film festival nobody in the audience could resist their wistful memories and could not even hide tears at the premiere of the documentary film *Happy Child*, by the now expatriate Croatian director Igor Mirković. This film is a (pathetic) testimony to the coming of age of one generation and their music, their hopes and dreams, their idealism and their yearning for freedom. Close to the end of the film, one could hear the verse “They did not dare, we all won!”² in the background. No Johnny,³ we did not, since objectively speaking they demolished us. That generation was a great victim (in many senses) of the forthcoming war, maybe not all persons, but the spirit of that time definitely. Among the very sad (but in a way symbolic) outcomes was the fact that one of the most luminous symbols of that free-minded spirit, the dauntless and unshrinking poet and rock singer, became one of the most prominent promoters of war criminals and vulgar nationalistic politics.

However, what has happened with the subsequent generations? What has happened with the new generation of young people? Isn’t it true that new generations are always protagonists of new energy and new hope? What is the perspective of those born in 1980-something, and 1990-something?⁴ During the 1990s they listened to verses such as “Dance all night until the dawn, who cares what will come tomorrow.”⁵ They were born at a time of deep social crisis, in the midst of the dissolution of their country and the most horrible European war since 1945. They grew up surrounded by narratives about evil others who wanted to destroy their own people, about an insensitive and often cruel world where they could not expect to find justice and understanding. Only a tiny minority of today’s young generation has traveled abroad. They do not know the other reality, except maybe the virtual one: from the Internet and cultural products (films, music, etc.) from the previous period and from other places.

Who are the Young People and Where is Their Place in Serbia Today

The concept “youth” refers to the stage of life between childhood and adulthood. This period in the human life circle is a time marked by change and rapid development much more than any other period. These changes are associated with biological maturation; social role redefinitions; cognitive, emotional, and moral development; and transitions from education to employment and from dependence within the primary family to independence and responsibility to make one’s own way of life. During this period, young people are expected to develop knowledge, skills and dispositions in order to be able to assume social roles in all spheres of their future activities. This process, generally, lasts until they reach an adequate level of social autonomy, responsibility and independence. The age limit to youth is hard to define unequivocally, and it is rather socially than biologically determined. It often includes longer schooling, earlier puberty and later marriage. According to the 2001 census,⁶ there are approximately half a million young people in each of the following age categories in Serbia: 15–19, 20–24 and 25–29, thus comprising approximately 20% of the total Serbian population. All those young people encounter two groups of problems. First, like elsewhere, they experience problems connected with growing-up and changes in social status, and second, they must deal with challenges presented by the concrete social circumstances and problems of society where they live. Their choices and the pathways to adulthood are determined by demographic, economic, cultural, technological, religious, and other structural factors. But young people are not only passive recipients shaped by outside factors. They always play an active role in shaping their own lives and society. They actively select their environments, friends, schools, romantic partners, and long-term goals. The decisions and choices of the younger generation can change existing societal structures and shape a new reality. Sometimes young people may organize social movements, which directly influence political reality, such as the Otpor (resistance) movement, which played a crucial role in the overthrow of Milošević’s regime in 2000. Each new generation is socialized under a specific set of social circumstances and it is shaped by them but, just as a pioneer of generational research, Karl Mannheim, argued,⁷ each new generation of youth also represents an instrument of social change. Young people

are generally characterized by openness to new experiences and often nurture aspirations to build a new world.

One negative phenomenon, connected with the social status of the youth, is very characteristic of Serbia. It is the phenomenon of *forcibly prolonged youth*. Although it may seem that prolonged youth cannot be a negative phenomenon but an unattainable ideal, it is truly negative. Prolonged youth does not entail the prolonged vigorous, dynamic, and energetic characteristics of a person but rather the impossibility of becoming financially independent. Even worse, such a state of dependence on one's parents for accommodation and sometimes other financial help may continue after full time employment! The average salary is equal to or even less than the average flat rent or mortgage rate.

However, differences within the younger generation can be, and are, greater than differences among particular strata of different generations. Dragomir Pantić⁸ has shown that social background is a much more influential factor in determining value orientation than generation itself. Younger and older professionals are more similar than, for instance, young professionals and young workers. In Serbia, as elsewhere in Europe, it is possible to find young promising scientists, people who enjoy clubbing, violent football fans, etc. There are young radicals and young democrats, members of right-wing and clerical organizations, as well as members of human rights organizations and many other groups. Absolute equality did not exist even in the regime of real socialism. Today, some groups of young people are very disadvantaged in comparison with others. Those groups include the Roma national minority whose members often do not have enough for basic existential needs; indeed, many Roma children do not go to school at all and only a small proportion of them go on to secondary education. Another disadvantaged group consists of persons with different kinds of special needs. Such young people encounter a number of impassable obstacles at each step in their everyday lives, so their activities are usually highly limited. Another disadvantaged group is young people from villages, especially from remote and undeveloped areas. They are usually forced to work hard for their families from pre-school age on. Hard work and poverty continue to characterize their lives until old age. They sometimes cannot even afford television, and they can only dream about very ordinary things like supermarkets, cinemas, libraries or basketball playgrounds. Social status and disposable options strongly determine the social values of their holders.

The Social Context in Serbia

The situation in Serbia does not sustain anyone, especially young people. Serbia has a strong legacy of wars and there are still some very strong factions that appeared during and as a result of these wars.⁹ Such groups, known *inter alia* as the “anti-Hague lobby,”¹⁰ have particular interests, above all to keep their positions and to erect obstacles to all positive changes lest they suffer as a result. That is the reason why they stop at nothing, having recourse to even the most extreme methods such as the assassination of Prime Minister Zoran Đinđić (in 2003). When legalism goes in their favor they emphasize it, when infatuation with falsities is useful for them they reproduce it through their tabloids, when violence is the only solution they use it. However, the most “interesting” weapon in their arsenal is their understanding of democracy. When modernistic and pro-European parties win elections by getting more votes, they continue to call the winners—traitors! Their basic principle is not democratic, as they do not have any respect for the number of votes, but rather affirm their own monopoly on patriotism¹¹ which, in their view, transcends “small matters” like the number of votes. The “higher values,” as they define them, are more important than the mere number of people who support some candidate or policy. These factions, which consist of war criminals and war profiteers, held very good positions in the early post-conflict period, having already attained powerful and influential positions during the war. They are disrespectful, and ready to save their positions after the war. Even more, they consider themselves heroes, expecting others to respect them, and be grateful. They poison the whole atmosphere in any society, they threaten journalists and politicians, corrupt them, and, when all else fails, they kill them. After a long period of war, of poor, hard conditions, a society as an entity loses its strength, its social capital, and such societies may not have enough strength to resist such groups, at least not immediately. At this time, the influence of new, democratic forces in Serbia is gaining in strength, but it is a very slow process.

For politicians in Serbia, even those from the “democratic bloc,” the younger generation is less important than the retired. This is so for a very pragmatic reason: the latter group is larger in number and its participation in voting is more than 90%, compared with approximately 30% participation on the part of young voters. However, the low turnout among young people is probably only a response to the fact that few political parties in Serbia have paid much attention to the interests of the younger generation.

Concept of Values and Their Adoption

Values have a very important role in human life. They have a central place in the human mind and they denote something desirable and therefore have a directive function in behavior of individuals. One of the most important socio-psychological contributors in the field of research about values, Milton Rokeach, defined values as “an enduring belief that a specific mode of conduct or end-state of existence is personally or socially preferable to an opposite or converse mode of conduct or end-state existence” and pointed out that “it is difficult for me to conceive of any problem social scientists might be interested in that would not deeply implicate human values.”¹² Another prominent researcher, Shalom Schwartz wrote that “[v]alues (1) are concepts or beliefs, (2) pertain to desirable end-states or behaviors, (3) transcend specific situations, (4) guide [the] selection or evaluation of behavior and events, and (5) are ordered [according to their] relative importance.”¹³ He further describes values as “the criteria people use to select and justify actions and to evaluate people (including self) and events.”¹⁴

In his value-pluralism model of ideological reasoning, Philip Tetlock wrote that “underlying all political belief systems are ultimate or terminal values that specify the end-states of public policy. These values—which may take such diverse forms as economic efficiency, social equality, individual freedom, crime control, national security, and racial purity—function as the back stops of belief systems.”¹⁵

There are different elements, on various levels, that influence the process of socialization whereby children and adolescents acquire values and other necessary dispositions for life in particular cultures and societies. In Serbia, the agents in this process include the recent conflict and post-conflict social climate, as well as the nationalistic public discourse of leading politicians. To these, one may also add hedonistic cultural messages from influential media, family background (educational level of parents, presence of home library, parental protection from negative influences), place of residence (center of Belgrade with many cultural institutions, outskirts of towns, villages, province), peers, local media, use of the Internet, travel, and many other factors.

It is very difficult and sometimes even impossible for a young person in real life to clearly define worthwhile and attainable goals. This is often the reason for rambling, lack of motivation to exert oneself, and for making compromises with “indecent proposals.” In the midst of an unviable economic situation, under the constant reproach of par-

ents, in the face of vital life decisions, it is not realistic to expect enduring rebelliousness. Young people often have no alternative but to accept offers they receive, even if these offers are inconsistent with their values. Such offers are often very disappointing and include bad employment conditions (low salary is only the beginning), degradation of self-esteem and other problematic outcomes. The value system is also influenced by such circumstances. Different people find different coping mechanisms, some of them accepting the ideas of extreme right-wing “national salvation” organizations such as Obraz (Honor), others join political parties or non-governmental organizations mainly for utilitarian reasons, and still others try to escape as far as possible from the public sphere into their small private worlds, or start to find some shallow hedonistic satisfaction.

Empirical Data Analysis

Serbia and, earlier, Yugoslavia have had a long tradition of empirical research focusing on the beliefs and values of young people. During the 1970s and 1980s, most of this research was conducted under the auspices of the youth communist organization,¹⁶ but authors enjoyed the freedom to discuss and even to criticize problems. Most recently, the Serbian Ministry for Sport and Youth prepared a *National strategy for young people*,¹⁷ which was adopted by the government in 2009. In the course of its work on this document, the ministry benefited from research conducted by the Institute of Psychology and the Center for Free Elections and Democracy (CESID). Several non-governmental organizations also conducted research and additional research has been carried out by social psychologists from the University of Belgrade. Therefore, there is enough information to get a clear idea about the values of Serbian young people these days.

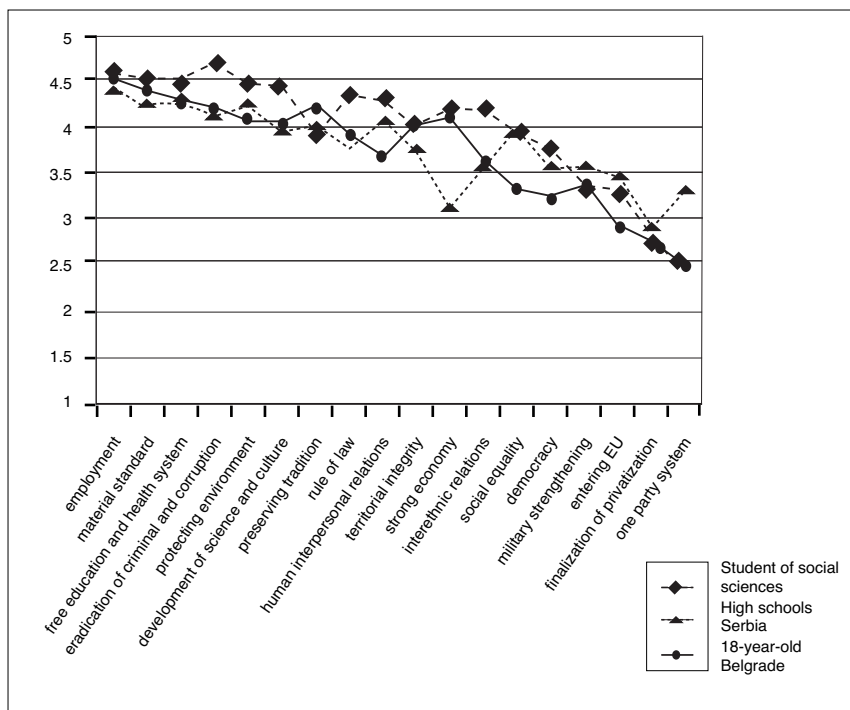
One of the standard ways which social psychology has to study values is to study values in the form of goals. Such an approach has been employed in research¹⁸ on three groups: 18-year-old students in their final year at various high schools in Belgrade, a representative sample of high school students from elsewhere in Serbia, and students of the social sciences. A list of goals was drawn up after considering the theories about goals developed by psychologists such as Henry Murray,¹⁹ Abraham Maslow,²⁰ Erich Fromm,²¹ and Milton Rokeach,²² as well as Ronald Inglehart’s research into materialistic and postmaterialistic values,²³ and much previous similar research conducted in

Serbia and earlier in Yugoslavia up to the end of 1980s.²⁴ Based on these sources, 18 personal and 18 social goals have been formulated. The participants assessed the importance of each goal to them, from 1—not important at all, to 5—an extremely important goal.

It is necessary to clarify the meaning of the adjectives personal and individual. All examined goals or values could be considered individual because they are evaluated from an individual point of view. However, some of them, such as self-actualization or hedonism, are self-centered and therefore personal, while others, such as a strong economy or social equality, are society-centered or social. Some goals, such as the living standard, could be understood at both a personal and a social level.

The selected results, relevant for this chapter, will be presented. The average value profile for socially relevant goals is presented in Figure 1.

Figure 1. The importance of social goals among the population of Serbian young people¹



The most important goals for the participants are values that Inglehart has called materialistic (material standard, employment, strong economy, and so forth). Some social rights, such as free education and free health care, also indicate the importance of basic existential needs. However, tradition and territorial integrity are also among the important goals of many young people. These results are in absolute agreement with all recent opinion polls on the general population in Serbia that show a high percent of those polled supporting stronger ties with the European Union (mainly because they expect that membership will bring a higher standard of living). However that support is often conditional—"if European Union accepts us as we are"—which does not include only folklore elements, but also the burden of the recent conflicts. On the other side, the EU is ready to open its door for Serbia, but only conditionally, if Serbia repudiates recent problematic policies and adopts common European values.

EU membership will be difficult to obtain, according to the results which also show the relatively low importance of values like "further development of democracy" and EU integration *per se*. Therefore, preferences from Figure 1 could indicate that the positive attitude toward the EU among young people in Serbia (and probably among older generations, too) has mainly (if not only) a utilitarian function, as an instrument for the improvement of material conditions of individuals and their society.

What many people of Serbia do not yet fully appreciate is that the materialistic goals, which they hope to see realized through membership in the EU, are incompatible with the nationalistic goals espoused by some actors. The human striving for a better life is completely natural and does not need additional persuasion, while appeals for suffering for any abstract idea (like national pride) are imposed and require constant reinforcement. Further, there is a clear and direct connection between EU membership, with all its benefits and demands, and better life conditions with greater opportunity to obtain those people's goals.

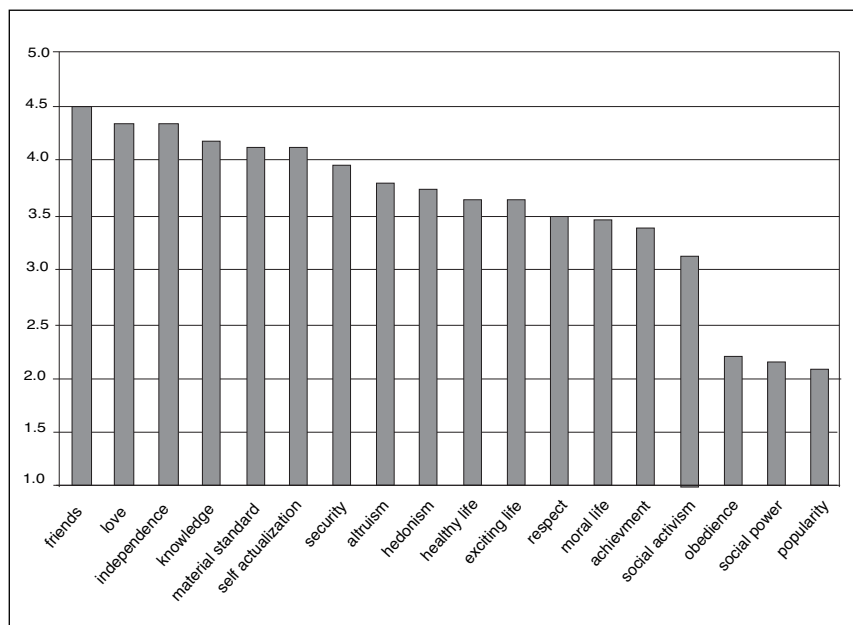
The great psychologist Gordon Allport introduced a concept of functional autonomy of motives, which holds that human motives can be functionally independent from the original motive responsible for a particular behavior.²⁵ In the Serbian case, it means that, during the integration process, the main driver will be utilitarian materialistic motives, and the process itself will open a space for the acceptance of new, post-materialistic values²⁶ such as tolerance, respect for human

rights, etc. At the end of this process, such post-materialistic values will obtain their own functional autonomy.

Regarding other examined goals, there are definitely fewer problems. It is important to note that some results can and should have different explanations in a variety of circumstances. For instance, if somebody in a stable democracy would set the goals of a stable state and the rule of law very high in the hierarchy of priorities, that could be sign of an authoritarian personality that sees decadence everywhere and always needs more order.²⁷ However, in a fragile, transitional country, full of real life examples of breaking laws, the importance of such social goals is the normal answer of each decent person.

In his prominent hierarchical value theory, Maslow posited that people pursue basic goals in order, from subsistence needs to self-actualization, and only as lower-order needs become satisfied do individuals turn to pursuing higher-order goals. Those results show the prevalence of materialistic goals, such as for instance in Germany after the Second World War, or in many countries of Eastern Europe around 1990.²⁸ Their experience bears out that only when people take traditional goals

Figure 2. Importance of personal values of young people in Serbia

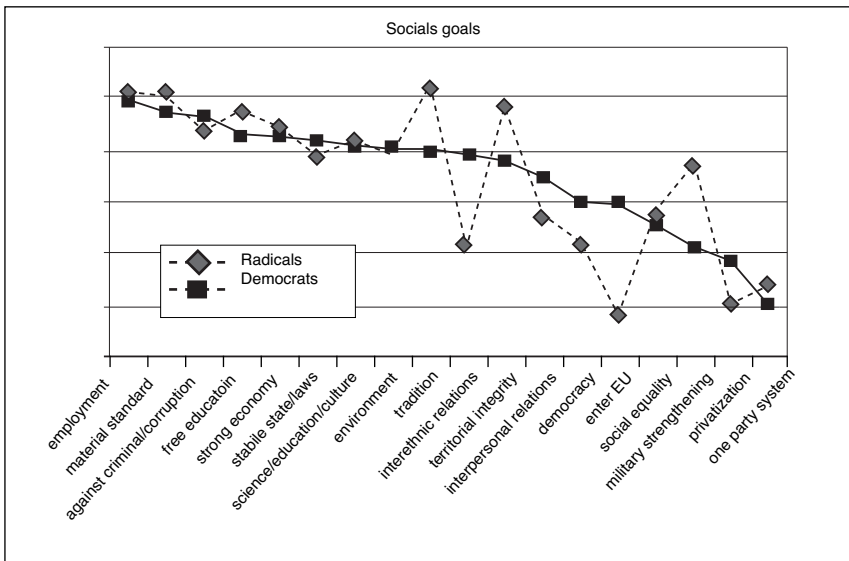


and values for granted do they start to stress higher, post-materialist goals for emancipation and similar. Inglehart shows that only in such societies, where people seek emancipation rather than security, do support and legitimacy of government come to be based on the calculation of interest, rather than on the feeling of belonging.

Personal goals and values

Regarding personal values, the picture is in accord with what might be expected. Young people, as everywhere else, value friendship, independence from their parents, real love and material advantage, and other goals are differentially important for different people. Our subjects (results in all three upper mentioned groups are quite similar) generally do not long either for power or obedience, and do not yearn for popularity! This disproves a myth according to which—since young people read celebrity magazines and frequently watch TV programs about celebrities—they yearn to be like their idols. However, such activities could have many other meanings; they often serve merely as a kind of relaxation after a strenuous day.

Figure 3. The values of democrats and radicals compared

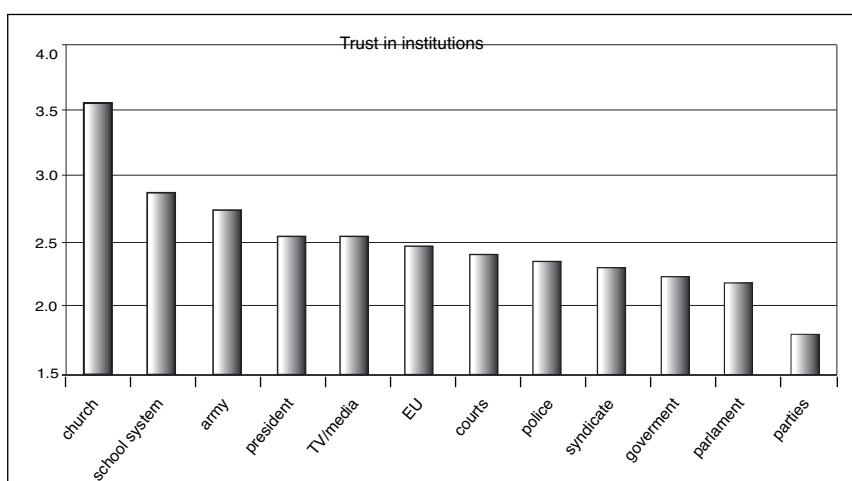


Comparison of two poles of the Serbian political spectrum

Since the Serbian political arena is quite polarized, with two big parties at the center of each pole,²⁹ it might be interesting to see the differences in the values between two groups of young people: those on the liberal-left and those on the nationalistic-right.

Some goals are widely accepted by both groups. All subjects think that it is very important to fight corruption and criminality, to achieve a better material standard and to guarantee employment. But subjects

Figure 4. Trust in different institutions



who support Vojislav Šešelj's Serbian Radical Party consider goals such as "preserving tradition," "strengthening military forces" and "preserving territorial integrity" (referring to Kosovo) to have the highest priority, while those who support democratic parties assign more importance to "bettering interethnic relations and minority rights," "furthering the development of democracy" and unconditional "admission to the EU" (meaning unconditional for Serbia).

Trust in institutions

There is a generally very low degree of trust in institutions (Figure 4.). Only the Orthodox Church has been trusted more than average. All other institutions are average, below line three.³⁰ Putnam³¹ clearly demonstrated the importance of such trust for social capital and for society's development.

Preferred lifestyles

Recent research by the Institute of Psychology³² on a quota sample of more than 2,500 high school students from all of Serbia gave some additional interesting results. Participants were asked about their personal and social values but also about their lifestyles: ways of spending their free time, about their hobbies, preferred music, reading habits, sport activities, volunteering, etc. All their answers regarding lifestyle have been put into a factor analysis, in order to find basic underlying factors and to identify basic categories of people and their characteristics. Five factors have been extracted.

Factor I collects variables such as reading books and scientific magazines, visiting theaters, attending rock and classical music concerts, volunteering, and showing interest in computers. This factor could be named “Show pupil.”

Factor II collects variables connected with interest in sport: reading sport magazines, watching sports on TV and going to sporting events, and practicing sports—“Sportsperson.”

Factor III gathers variables like interest in celebrities (through magazines, TV programs), watching soap operas and reading novels with similar content, listening to folk music live and from CDs, researchers have called this factor the “Pink³³ generation.”

Factor IV gathers variables connected with entertainment, with going out to clubs, cafés, concerts of different kind of music, DJ performances—“outgoing persons.”

Factor V collects variables connected with interest in techno and hip hop music and interest in computing—“techno generation.”³⁴

In the next step, subjects were chosen, whose score was higher than 75% of other subjects in one particular factor, and only in that factor. In that way, 38% of the sample subjects were chosen as ideal types (Weber). There were approximately 7% of clear representatives of each group defined by the mentioned factors. It means that some 7% of high school students in Serbia are mainly interested in science and culture, and that approximately the same percentage is interested in sports, a third group in going out, etc. But what happened with others, with the majority of almost two thirds of the generation? It seems that they had not found their dominant preoccupation and still loiter around searching for meaning in their lives. But what remains for young people in a country that does not offer many alternatives? One of the most frequent words (used as abstract concept, personal characteristic, state

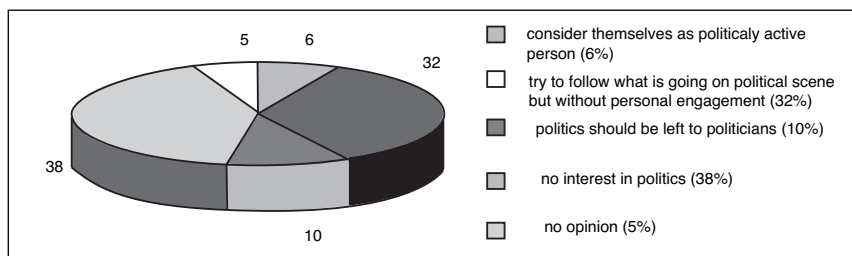
of affairs, explanatory adjective) is *smaranje* that can be explained as the absence of amusement or psychological stimulation or as a clumsy “bleat” without ideas (where “bleat” means to waste time).³⁵

Other studies

Other research on young people includes the work of Isidora Jarić³⁶ who has identified four subtypes of youth—“R generation”—who articulate different kinds of responses on outer pressures. Those are: the *B92 generation* with proactive responses, *provincials* who are afraid to speak out and therefore stay passive, rigid and aggressive *fundamentalists*, and destabilized and paralyzed *guests* (in their own life). Members of the club of young people OPA³⁷ found, in the course of research on 750 subjects from 17 to 23 years, that almost 85% of respondents had positive attitudes toward EU integration. However, almost 50% of them believed that the EU should make some concessions.³⁸ In a separate study, involving 468 high school students in 2005, the youth network *Live Together* found that only slightly over a half of respondents were opposed to a national state which provided guarantees for only one ethnic group; two thirds were interested in learning about others cultures, while one third feared that the influence of other cultures could endanger national identity.³⁹

The aforementioned CESID has conducted research on the active participation of young people in social life. CESID’s research was conducted in December 2007, on a representative sample of about 4,800 young people aged 15-30, from all parts of Serbia.⁴⁰ The highest level of activism has been found in sports, students’ organizations, and leisure organizations. Regarding political activism, only 6% of respondents view themselves as politically active. Other results are presented in Figure 5.

Figure 5. Political activism according to CESID



Factors that influence political activism include gender, residential independence from parents, and, above all, attained educational level. People who have completed university are up to five times as active politically as those with only elementary education.

We also examined many individual political attitudes⁴¹ but only a few of the 36 values correlate with them. The prominent political scientist John Zaller assumed that the relationship between values and political attitudes would depend on levels of political sophistication. Those who are less sophisticated, according to Zaller, would be unable to connect the cues in the political messages they receive with their values and thus to form a strong relationship between their values and attitudes. In the survey data, I found confirmation for Zaller's theory. For instance, there is no connection between assigning high importance to strong economy, a better living standard, a stable state, personal security, and one's attitude toward cooperation with the ICTY. Even more, there is slightly negative correlation between "altruism" and "moral life," on the one hand, and one's attitude about the extradition of indicted war criminal Ratko Mladić on the other hand! That is clear evidence of a wrench in one's frame of reference as a consequence of the official policy! Right-wing ideologues close to Vojislav Koštunica,⁴² "political analysts" as they want to flatter themselves, have been trying to build a picture of the world close to their ideological orientations, where young people are devoted, above all, to the preservation of national tradition and, in the first place, to the defense of Kosovo. Their papers are always highly biased⁴³ and without much foundation in reality. Conversely, Serbian students (in different pools) always advocate more tolerance, less nationalism, and less inter-ethnic distance than what one finds in the official media and public discourse.

In conclusion, there are reasons to believe that values, per se, are not a great obstacle for Serbia and its future democratic development. There are some problems, but there are many personal and social goals which young people in Serbia share with their peers elsewhere. It seems that the larger problem is that people have been intentionally confused by political forces that have some interest in the status quo. Young people have been cheated by having been offered false ways to realize their genuine goals: to live a better life in a stable country without criminals and corruption, to have good friends and real love. Thus, if society's efforts manage to make this confusion clear and to show them clear ways, it will give new fuel to the engine, which moves the entire society forward, toward democracy.

Notes

- ¹ Verse of the song “Uradi nešto,” by the rock group *Azra*. Long play record album *Azra*, Jugoton, Zagreb, 1980.
- ² Verse of the song “Poljska u mom srcu,” by the rock group *Azra*. Long play record album *Sunčana strana ulice*, Jugoton, Zagreb, 1981.
- ³ Branimir Johnny Štulić, frontman of popular rock group *Azra*. He has lived in the Netherlands since the end of the 1980s.
- ⁴ One of the most famous songs (by Đorđe Balašević), “You can count on us,” is a homage to Tito from the generation born after The Second World War.
- ⁵ From the song “Žurka of Dobar, loš” by the *zao* band, CD *Bez love*, City Records, Beograd, 1995.
- ⁶ Statistical office of the Republic of Serbia at [http:// webzrs.stat.gov.rs /axd/en/popis.htm](http://webzrs.stat.gov.rs/axd/en/popis.htm) [accessed on 29 April 2010].
- ⁷ Karl Mannheim, “Das Problem der Generation,” in Karl Mannheim, *Wissenssoziologie. Auswahl aus dem Werk*, ed. by Kurt H. Wolff (Neuwied/Berlin: Luchterhand Verlag, 1964), pp. 509–565.
- ⁸ Dragomir Pantić, *Vrednosne orijentacije mladih u Srbiji* (Belgrade: Istraživačko izdavački centar SSO Srbije, 1981), p. 97
- ⁹ Sometimes “anti-Hague lobby” syntagm has been used to denote that group
- ¹⁰ Because opposition to the ICTY in the Hague is one of the main points of the credo of their ideology and actions.
- ¹¹ Daniel Bar-Tal, “The Monopolization of Patriotism,” in Daniel Bar-Tal and Ervin Staub (eds.), *Patriotism in the Life of Individuals and Nations* (Chicago: Nelson Hall, 1997), pp. 246–270.
- ¹² Milton Rokeach, *The Nature of Human Values* (New York: The Free Press, 1973.) p. ix.
- ¹³ Shalom H. Schwartz, “Universals in the Content and Structure of Values: Theory and Empirical Tests in 20 Countries,” in Mark P. Zanna (ed.), *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*, Vol. 25 (New York: Academic Press, 1992), p. 4.
- ¹⁴ *ibid.* p. 1
- ¹⁵ Philip Tetlock, “Coping with Trade-offs: Psychological Constraints and Political Implications,” in Arthur Lupia, Matthew McCubbins, and Samuel Popkin (eds.), *Elements of Reason: Cognition, Choice, and the Bounds of Rationality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 247.
- ¹⁶ *Savez socijalističke omladine*.
- ¹⁷ The full text of this document can be found (among others) at the website <http://www.mos.gov.rs/upload/dl/ENGLISH/nys.pdf> [accessed on 29 April 2010].
- ¹⁸ Bora Kuzmanović and Nebojša Petrović, “Struktura preferencija ličnih i društvenih ciljeva srednjoškolaca,” in *Psihologija*, Vol. 40, No. 4 (2007):

567–585; and Bora Kuzmanović and Nebojša Petrović, “Lični i društveni ciljevi i stavovi prema političkim strankama,” in *Srpska politička misao*, Vol. 18, No. 1–2, (2007a): 163–188.

Papers by the same authors on the other above mentioned groups are still in the preparation phase.

- ¹⁹ Henry A. Murray, *Explorations in Personality* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1938).
- ²⁰ Abraham H. Maslow, “A Theory of Human Motivation,” in *Psychological Review*, Vol. 50, No. 4 (1943): 370–96.
- ²¹ Erich Fromm, *The Sane Society* (New York: Rinehart & Co., 1955).
- ²² Milton Rokeach, *The Nature of Human Values* (New York: Free Press, 1973).
- ²³ Ronald Inglehart, *The Silent Revolution: Changing Values and Political Styles among Western Publics* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1977).
- ²⁴ Some of the books include: Dragomir Pantić, *Vrednosne orijentacije mladih u Srbiji* (Belgrade: Istraživačko izdavački centar SSO Srbije, 1981); Vladimir Goati and others, *Društveno političko angažovanje mladih* (Belgrade: Institut društvenih nauka, 1977); Snežana Joksimović et al., *Stavovi i opredeljenja jugoslovenske omladine* (Belgrade: Mladost, 1974); Dragomir Pantić et al., *Interesovanja mladih* (Belgrade: Istraživačko izdavački centar SSO Srbije, 1981); Jovan Raičević et al., *Mladi i nacionalizam* (Belgrade: Mladost, 1984); Radomir D. Lukić et al., *Omladina i društvene krize* (Belgrade: Centar za marksizam univerziteta u Beogradu, 1983); and Milan Kučan et al., *Mlada generacija danas* (Belgrade: Mladost, 1982).
- ²⁵ Gordon, W. Allport, “The functional autonomy of motives,” in *American Journal of Psychology*, Vol. 50 (1937): 141–156.
- ²⁶ According to the division given by Ronald Inglehart in *The Silent Revolution*.
 Ronald Inglehart called those goals post-materialistic, not because they first appear in modern time—they were articulated powerfully in the enlightenment and some notions of human rights even earlier back to Roman republic—but because they start to dominate as preferences for the persons who secured their needs for basic existential, materialistic goals and take those goals for granted.
- ²⁷ Theodor W. Adorno, Else Frenkel-Brunswik, David Levinson, and Nevitt R. Sanford *The Authoritarian Personality* (New York: Harper and Row, 1950); and William F. Stone, Gerda Lederer, and Richard Christie (eds.), *Strength and Weakness: The Authoritarian Personality Today* (New York: Springer, 1993)
- ²⁸ Shalom Schwartz and Anat Bardi, “Influences of Adaptation to Communist Rule on Value Priorities in Eastern Europe,” in *Political Psychology*, Vol. 18, No. 2 (1997): 385–410.

- ²⁹ The Democratic Party of President Boris Tadić, that is considered as pro-European and the nationalist Serbian Radical Party of Vojislav Šešelj who is facing war crimes charges at The Hague ICTY.
- ³⁰ Here 1 means “not trust at all” and 2 means for low trust, etc.
- ³¹ Robert Putnam, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2000).
- ³² Ivana Stepanović and others, data from personal correspondence.
- ³³ After the Serbian TV Pink that has mainly promoted such a cultural pattern.
- ³⁴ Where “Techno” does not denote only to music but also to interest in technology.
- ³⁵ Krstarica forum at <http://forum.krstarica.com/showthread.php?t=111193> [accessed on 29 May 2010]
- ³⁶ Isidora Jarić, “U kandžama izneverenih očekivanja,” *Filozofija i društvo*, Vol. 2 (Belgrad: Institut za Filozofiju i Društvenu Teoriju, 2005) pp. 75–86, 2005.
- ³⁷ Which is acronym of *Omladina preuzima akciju* or *Youth take an action*.
- ³⁸ Tamara Skrozza, “Šta vole mladi,” *Vreme*, Vol. 895, Februar 28, 2008.
- ³⁹ *Ibid.*
- ⁴⁰ The entire report can be found at the website: http://www.mos.gov.rs/upload/dl/OMLADINA/Istrazivanja/Aktivizam_mladih.pdf [accessed on 29 April 2010]
- ⁴¹ Bora Kuzmanović and Nebojša Petrović, “Vrednosni ciljevi kao činioci političkih stavova i mnjenja mladih,” in *Sociologija*, Vol. 50, No.2 (2008): 153–174.
- ⁴² Vojislav Koštunica led Serbian government from several months after the assassination of Prime Minister Zoran Đinđić, until early 2008.
- ⁴³ For instance Slobodan Reljić, in his column “Generacija koja raste” in NIN weekly magazine, on 21st February 2008, praises young hooligans, who devastated Belgrade after the proclamation of Kosovo independence. “There is a new generation on the stage that changes stereotype about anational and apolitical boys and girls in Serbia, who are only interested in Shengen’s visas, Afgani fuzz and Hong Kong’s plasma screens.” It is a generation that does not believe in Europe, he concludes.

Part Three – Media and Films

The Post-2000 Media Situation in Serbia

Izabela Kisić and Slavija Stanojlović

The 5 October 2000 ouster of Slobodan Milošević did not mark the break with the decade-long policy which he had embodied. On the contrary, the ideological masterminds of the Greater Serbia project (influential intellectual circles rallied around the Serb Academy of Arts and Sciences, the Association of Writers of Serbia, etc.) and “executors” thereof on the ground (army, police and their intelligence services), removed the highly compromised Milošević in order to continue the implementation of that project by other means, whereby “democratic transition” was a facade which clouded the intent of their efforts.

The foregoing was indicated by all the key events which marked the period from October 2000 to July 2008, notably the hand-over of Slobodan Milošević to the Hague Tribunal, his trial and death, and the cruel liquidation of the first Serb democratic Prime Minister Zoran Đinđić. All of the foregoing developments can help us understand the EU’s insistence on the formation of the state union of Serbia and Montenegro (in 2003), the Serb response to Montenegro’s declaration of independence (2006), the prolonged sabotaging of any rational resolution of Kosovo’s status—whose recent declaration of independence in February 2008 was the final act of dissolution of the former SFRY—and finally, the continuous undermining of Bosnia-Herzegovina by dint of control and instrumentalization of Republika Srpska (considered a legitimate war booty).

Some representatives of the political class and security apparatus, headed for eight years by Vojislav Koštunica, had blocked any attempt at a genuine social overhaul which would have put in place European standards and values. Moreover, they thus hold hostage a vast majority of the population who sincerely want to accede to European integration, in the first instance to the European Union.

The majority of the mass media, under the sway of influential lobbies and new, unidentified owners, back the general orientation of the ruling class by continuing to generate confusion among its readership. On the other side, nationalistic themes were present because there was never any owning up or confrontation of the past on the level of society as a whole. This can be discerned, among other things, in the voluminous publishing activity, which justifies and simplifies the Milošević era. A clear distinction which in the Milošević era existed between the pro-regime and so-called independent media, disappeared in the wake of his fall in the year 2000. Hence, the media situation in Serbia is now more confused and worse than it was 10 years ago.

Mechanisms

During the rule of Slobodan Milošević, the print and broadcast media were mere instruments of policy geared toward the full justification of the Greater Serbia project and its result, namely the wars in the former Yugoslavia. In the post-5 October period the expected changes, that is discontinuation of such a policy, failed to materialize. That said, the media not only failed to respond to controversies of the Serbian transition, but moreover became an integral part thereof, and a principal contributor to further confusion among the citizenry. Such intentional confusing was made possible by the lack of political consensus on the new set of values to be put in place and failure of the political elite to effect a clear break with the Milošević era legacy.

The print media are largely responsible for the enormous rise of the Serbian Radical Party and the radicalization of the Serbian society. Furthermore changes in the legal provisions and regulations of the media did not suffice to alter the general reporting standards. Indeed, the majority of the media-related laws were passed thanks to the pressure of the international community. Most of them are in keeping with international standards. However, the intervention of the international community was focused on the media-related legal regulations, while all other issues, notably those related to media ethics and the set of operational values were left in the hands of domestic experts. The latter, alas, were not strong enough to successfully tackle those ethical concerns.

The issues over which the reformists and anti-reformists most often clashed were the following: co-operation with the Hague Tribunal and the trial of war crimes indictees, resolution of the Kosovo status, rela-

tions with neighboring countries, decentralization (above all stances on Vojvodina's autonomy), minorities, stances on NGOs and civil society. The reform legacy of Zoran Đinđić was also a bone of contention, as reflected primarily in the media coverage of the trial of the prime minister's assassins and the smear campaigns targeting his closest allies.

When conditions for greater media freedom were created, the market for tabloids started to flourish. These tabloids ran anti-reform information and produced scandals on the orders of political interest groups and domestic tycoons. The bevy of tabloids also imposed "their topics" on other media and have considerably impacted the Serbian public opinion. The few independent media, which had painstakingly built their reputations as anti-war media during the Milošević era, did not succeed, in the post-5 October period, in forging their new identities and responding adequately to the new challenges. Dead-ended by the proliferation of aggressive tabloids, many independent newspapers were compelled to tackle the issues imposed by those very tabloids. Thus, the media alternative was sidelined and lost its Milošević-era role as educators of the public.

Tabloid journalism in post-5 October Serbia occupies such an important place, because it directly encroaches on the political sphere and provides a strong backing for anti-reform and right wing forces. Such journalism deftly curries favor with the general public, which was subjected to a twenty-year long indoctrination with nationalism and fear of Europe and the West, and which in the aftermath of recent wars is defeated and pauperized. (The principal topics are always political scandals, while pornographic content, brutal and crime stories with lurid details, and culture saturated with elements of kitsch, aim to attract a broader public). Tabloids are the first to launch or cover alleged political scandals, but what is absent from such coverage is serious analysis. Then those scandals are "taken over" by the "serious media" for "re-design" which consists in the inclusion of comments by analysts inclined to certain political orientations and spin doctors. Thus, the aforementioned scandals assume the mantle of serious business. Such re-designing of political scandals was spearheaded by *NIN*, the traditional Serb weekly, which in the early nineties had played a key role in shaping the ascent of Slobodan Milošević. For a while the daily *Politika* followed suit. That daily, shortly after Đinđić's assassination, was taken over by the right-wing camp.

However, even the liberal dailies failed to avoid the trap of tabloid-style coverage. Other serious dailies and weeklies began emulating the

tabloid style coverage, notably by their choice of interviewees and topics and their basic tack to certain developments, processes and issues. The only difference was in the writing style and vocabulary. However, in view of their impact on formation of public opinion, the responsibility of those serious dailies and weeklies was far greater than that of tabloids. Thus, the coverage of serious reform-related concerns dwindled, while the coverage of scandals already treated by the gutter press, increased. Representatives of the pro-reform camp were thus compelled to focus on fending off accusations and smear campaign allegations, instead of focusing on topics which they wanted to tackle. By extension, the media were practically prevented from launching and pursuing a dialogue on important issues of the transition of Serbian society.

Media ownership is not transparent. According to the research of the Independent Association of Journalists of Serbia, today mainstream media are in the hands of Milošević's former cronies:

The most important media in Serbia are owned by domestic businessmen and tycoons. The smaller part thereof is owned by the German 'WAZ', Swiss 'Ringier', and the US News Corporation, but the state structures still directly own some media (...). Of a total of twenty observed media in Serbia (radio and TV stations with national frequencies, dailies) as many as twelve are owned by domestic businessmen, or rather, Serbian tycoons, that is the men who made their "first million dinars" thanks to their close ties with the Milošević regime.¹

According to that association, only two print media are fully owned by multinational media companies (*Blic* and *24 sata* are owned by the Swiss 'Ringier'). State structures own nearly half of the shares in the oldest daily, *Politika*. As regards the large-distribution daily *Večernje novosti*, the Republic of Serbia controls 29.5% of the shares, the Fund for Retirement and Disability Insurance controls a 7.15% share, and three foreign companies (Trimax Investments Gmbh, Ardos Holding Gmbh, and Karamat Holdings Ltd) whose ownership is non-transparent, own the majority of shares, about 62.24%.²

On the other hand, tabloids appear and disappear, while details about their owners are even less accessible to the general public. They are usually launched on the eve of elections and at the time of other important political processes and developments. Some of them have very low circulation (contrary to their influence, achieved thanks to the important news leaked by them) and are strapped for cash. This

implies that profit is not the goal of their existence. Judging by the character of the information marketed by those tabloids (secret and intelligence documents of the state security services, minutes and shorthand recordings of intercepted conversations), one could say that they are informed by the security services. It is also assumed that some tabloids are used for money laundering. The issue of the financing or funding of the gutter press was raised during Operation Saber (a mass round-up which was expected to lead to the uncovering and arrest of Đinđić's assassins). Then it was discovered that the financier of *Identitet*,³ one of the tabloids spearheading the smear campaigning against Đinđić, was a member of the Zemun Gang indicted for the assassination of the prime minister.

On the political level, the editorial concept of the tabloids overlaps with the policy of anti-reform forces. Some of those tabloids banned during the 2003 state of emergency, were later re-launched under different names. Journalists and editors often changed publishing houses, all the while retaining their editorial concepts. In the meantime, several publications were printed in Serbia, which dealt with connections among journalists, secret services, organized gangs, and war criminals.

A bleak picture of the journalistic profession in post-5 October Serbia may be reduced to a cliché: let both sides be represented, regardless of the veracity of information or sincerity of the interviewees. Both sides are treated equally, a journalist mechanically writes down a pertinent statement and then forwards it in its crude form to print. In the print media, there is no analysis or research journalism. What characterizes the coverage of most print media is hyperinflation of "undisclosed or anonymous sources" whose statements are published without any previous checking or vetting. The majority of the print media, including those representing serious, analytical journalism, have tackled most scandals from the angle of those "informing" about them, without any critical distance or cross-checking.

Political influence on the media is usually peddled by the "yielding" of exclusive information and launching of scandals rife with serious accusations against the "enemy." (Scandals are never discovered by dint of research efforts on the part of journalists, but such stories are in fact placed from the outside, from certain political and economic power-centers). At play is a very subtle mechanism of exerting influence on the media, which can be proven only if the journalists or editors-in-chief decide to resist such pressure and talk about them openly.

The print media usually quote “anonymous sources,” and fail to check the veracity of information offered by a “source,” in other words, it failed to assess whether such information was only an instrument in a political showdown. Public relations agencies were more powerful than most media, and powerful party spin doctors and public relations agencies usually managed to supply “doctored” information to the majority of editors-in-chief.

For a long time there was much hushing up of the issue of the ethical conduct of Serbian journalists by the members of that very line of business. As recently as 2005, a press council composed of journalists from various newspapers was set up within the framework of the Media Center, a Belgrade-based organization which provides wide-ranging media services, founded by the Independent Association of Journalists of Serbia. That body issues monthly reports on the observance of the professional ethical code in the print media. In the meantime, several studies were published which dealt with relations among journalists, the mafia, and war criminals, and included an analysis of press coverage by newspapers which had backed the toppling of the pro-reform government of Zoran Đinđić and had created an image of him as a criminal, in a bid to cloud the true political background of the smothering of the pro-reform option.

In this analysis we shall not deal with the daily *Danas* and weekly *Vreme*, for they had a fairly independent editorial policy. But they have low circulation and are still forging their identities. The emergence of numerous aggressive nationalistic organizations, notorious for their criminal acts and violence against their political opponents and national minorities, in post-5 October Serbia is probably due to the role played by the media over a period of two decades in targeting non-Serbs, political opponents and minorities.

Criminalization of the Image of Zoran Đinđić

The most conspicuous and dramatic consequence of the smear campaign against Zoran Đinđić was the creation of a social atmosphere in which his opponents felt emboldened to take the ultimate step—not only his character assassination, but also his physical assassination. In the aftermath of the assassination, the media campaign against him led to the tainting of the reputation of his closest, pro-reform aides. The principal goal of the campaign was the criminalization of the image of Zoran Đinđić with a view to convincing the general public that it was

only a mafia collaborator, and not the first pro-reform Prime Minister of Serbia, who had been assassinated. The results of such a campaign were first the victory of the Democratic Party of Serbia, the strengthening of the Serbian Radical Party, and the total exclusion from the public life of Đinđić's closest allies for a whole year.

That campaign fully demonstrated the depth of the conflict between the two Serbias, the liberal and conservative one. In such a conflict-ridden situation, the conservative bloc dominated the mass media. That conflict escalated when the Đinđić-led government handed over the former Serbian President, Slobodan Milošević, to the Hague Tribunal, thus creating a good opportunity for Serbia's political U-turn and its riddance of the burden of its war legacy.

Analysis of the contents of anti-Đinđić texts leads us to deduce that behind them were certain departments of the state security services, military structures and organized, criminal gangs, and also some political parties which thus used the media to promote and attain their own goals. All such "information" was justified and confirmed through arguments of politicians, experts, and analysts, while journalists hid behind the run-of-the mill phrase, "we only write what we have been told by our interviewees and interlocutors."⁴ According to a study of the Journalistic Documentation Ebart, journalists and editors almost exclusively picked the interlocutors who had a critical stance about Đinđić's actions.⁵ For example, the allegations of Vojislav Šešelj, on trial at the Hague, about evidence relating to co-operation between the mafia and Đinđić received much coverage. On the other hand, the government had to spend much time defending itself from such press-hyped accusations. Since such topics were dominant in the media, key aspects of the transition and analysis thereof have not been tackled or discussed at all.

One of the mechanisms of the anti-Đinđić campaign was a "disclosure" of a slew of misinformation about Đinđić's close ties with organized gangland and mafia, vividly summed up by the weekly *Blic* News line—"Zoran Đinđić, a Nervous Capo of Serbia."⁶ Unfortunately, the general public became aware of the implications of this fabricated misinformation only a year on, during the trial of his assassins.⁷ In parallel with the continuing anti-Đinđić campaign, his government was preparing the first trial of members of organized crime in Serbia.

A good example of the above is the case of the "letters of Ljiljana Buha" which grabbed the attention of the general public, a few months before the prime minister's assassination and at the time of the pre-elec-

tion campaign in which presidential contenders of the former Democratic Opposition of Serbia or DOS were pitted against each other. Ljiljana Buha is the wife of one of the members of the Zemun gang, Ljubiša Buha. She was tasked with denouncing her husband and pointing out his links with Đinđić. The foregoing was due to the fact that Ljubiša Buha agreed to be a protected witness in the trials against organized crime. Three years later, before the special court for organized crime, Ljiljana Buha stated that she had been kidnapped by the Zemun Clan, that she never wrote the incriminating letters, but was only forced to sign them.⁸ Nevertheless, the story about those letters had already achieved the desired effect among the general public, despite the editors' failure to verify their authenticity. In the nineties, letters from readers and from obscure and controversial personalities which were featured in *Politika*'s column "Echoes and Reactions" were used to defame political opponents. In the post-5 October Serbia they were "moved" onto the front pages of tabloids and even on the pages of more respectable dailies. In her letters, Ljiljana Buha maintained that her husband is "a very dangerous criminal," that "Đinđić was a frequent guest in our house," that Beba Popović⁹ "took part in the operation of covering up shady deals of my husband."¹⁰ Statements made by Vojislav Koštunica, at the time when he was a contender for the post of prime minister of Serbia, were identical to the messages contained in those letters. Fonet Agency carried his statement to the effect that part of the ruling coalition had close connections with the mafia and his warning that "a legal state cannot be established in a country in which organized crime and corruption flourish."¹¹ During a pre-election rally in Niš he stated that "there are close and covert ties between mafia, criminals and incumbent authorities," "the social wealth is passing into the hands of those who handle bloody and dirty money" and "those who oppose such people, favor the good prospects of Serbia." Koštunica was even more explicit in his interview to Radio Television Serbia: "There are many clear indications that the man who is currently prime minister (Zoran Đinđić) has odd and interesting ties with some businessmen." When the other contender, Miroljub Labus from the Democratic Party, warned him that he was resorting to slander, Koštunica retorted: "That is not slander; I merely suggested that the media should write about those connections...."¹²

Perhaps even more obscure is the coincidence between the media message of Milorad Luković Legija, indicted for the assassination of Prime Minister Đinđić and Dragan Jočić, an official of the Democratic

Party of Serbia (DSS), who in 2004 had been appointed the minister of internal affairs. Indeed, in his letter to the media dated 28 January 2003, a month and a half before Đinđić's assassination, Legija accused the government of having established close co-operation with the Hague Tribunal. The foregoing prompted Dragan Jočić, then Vice President of the DSS, to say: "that letter doesn't have criminal or military features...it is not a letter of an outlaw. That letter is in fact a political analysis of the government's work and all events which took place since 5 October."¹³ Even the serious weekly *NIN* became embroiled in that smear campaign when, in its issue of 30 January 2003, it re-capped the pertinent information, which had first appeared in the tabloid. The title of the side-box "The War of Serbian God-fathers" was a clear allusion to the mafia godfathers, that is, an implication that Zoran Đinđić was one of the godfathers. *NIN* maintained, based on information gleaned by its own, unnamed sources, that "on Spasojević's sofa¹⁴ sat personalities from the executive branch." The other high-brow weekly in Serbia, the liberal-minded *Vreme*, drew an entirely different conclusion about those letters: "Open threats by someone with such a biography must be indeed considered a precedent. Since Legija is a man of action, a man who has repeatedly demonstrated naked force, one has ground to fear the worst!"¹⁵ And that is the gist of the matter. Tabloids and the respectable *NIN* have never discussed the biography of a person issuing such threats to the government of Serbia, and thus gave him a stamp of credibility.

The man who played such a negative and dominant role in the Yugoslav battlefields, from Bosnia to Kosovo, Milorad Luković Legija, was portrayed by the print media after his arrest as "a movie hero in whose terrifying power there is some roguish charm."¹⁶ Statements of Legija's lawyers, his wife, his mother, a criminal accused of various crimes, analysts, and high clerics of the Serbian Orthodox Church, received much coverage. The print media also gave much exposure to many obscure personalities tasked with obstructing the trial¹⁷ and continued to make allegations about Đinđić's supposed ties with the gangland and to glorify the accused. In excerpts from Legija's biography published in the tabloids there was no mention of his involvement in political murders and the charges he faced for war crimes. The "serious" daily *Politika* followed suit:

His conspicuous leadership and fighter's qualities attracted the attention of the State Security Services and made them decide to engage

him...Under Legija's leadership the Special Operations Unit gained a special status. Legija and his men received a new task in 1998 and 1999, to face off fighters of the so-called Kosovo Liberation Army. Because of their easily recognizable fatigues and vehicles, they sowed fear wherever they appeared. During the withdrawal of the Serbian police and army from Kosovo and Metohija, they were the last unit to abandon that area. It was rumored that in some localities they were even welcomed by Albanians with flags and applauses, for they mistook their vehicles and fatigues for the American ones!¹⁸

Večernje novosti, a large-circulation daily, in a benign attitude toward those indicted for Đinđić's assassination, ran a "moving" statement of Legija's former brother-in-arms in the Foreigners' Legion:

The words of honor and devotion, representing a much-honored moral code of legionnaires are inscribed on the monument to the perished unit members, in the central square of the Quartier Venau in Aubegne. Those inscribed words are the reason for their silence and reluctance to talk to journalists. They even avoid talking about their past with their closest friends. Only after several days of our stay in Aubegne did some of them open up and say something about Milorad Luković Legija."¹⁹

By dint of the Serbian press, criminals were given a platform to suggest that Legija could never kill a Serb, while his mother and wife, understandably, continued to extol his humanity and warmth! On the other hand, the family and collaborators of Zoran Đinđić were not given much media access. During the long trial of Đinđić's assassins, the print media churned out the most diverse conspiracy theories and continued to spawn them even after the trial had been wrapped up and sentences handed down.²⁰

Media Support for War Criminals and Revision of the Past

Serbia stood a good chance of kick-starting the lustration process, that is, of tackling seriously the character of the war in the former Yugoslavia, including Serbian responsibility for the war and for organized war crimes, when the Đinđić-led government handed over Slobodan Milošević to the Hague Tribunal. But the media, instead of giving much exposure to the contents and counts of Milošević's indictment, for the sake of bringing it before the public, opted for a different course of

action, that is, in fact prevented any dialogue about that topic. Thus, a series of retrograde processes and conflicts in the political arena were kicked off. Ultimately the faction which repudiated discontinuity with the Milošević regime and legacy prevailed. Attempts to hold serious conversations about the war crimes against the non-Serbian population were foiled within the fold of the state-run and pro-state media. Programs with such themes were also taken off the air (RTS was quick to discontinue even the live broadcasts of the trial of Slobodan Milošević.)

In his analysis of the Hague Tribunal coverage by the daily *Danas*, the lawyer Srđa Popović, after noting that the aforementioned daily published the best reports from the Hague, indicated that one headline, namely: “Milošević: Yugoslav People’s Army did not Shoot Down Prisoners in Vukovar,” was not adequate. Indeed, Popović underscored that the news was not Milošević’s response to the testimony, but rather the very character of testimony of then President of Croatia, Stjepan Mesić, and therefore that the headline should have read: “Mesić: the Yugoslav People’s Army shot down sick civilians in Vukovar.” According to Popović, the intention being to suggest that such a “testimony” may impact the court’s decision, while in fact that decision cannot be influenced by Milošević’s naked, irrelevant, and procedural denial of the veracity of such a testimony. Popović concluded: “Those two headlines most certainly have a different impact on the readership.” He also quoted a series of other sources, accessible to the general public, which proved Mesić’s statement.”²¹

Coverage of the Hague Tribunal trials and analysis indicated that the government did not have public support for the arrest of the war crimes indictees. The former is best illustrated by the rebellion on the part of the Red Berets. That rebellion was motivated by the arrest of the brothers Banović, one of whom was an ICTY war crimes indictee. While Koštunica backed the rebellion, Đinđić condemned it. The media used the prevailing circumstances to attack the weakest links of the Đinđić-led government—the judiciary and the police. The press tended to depict the Red Berets in a very benign light. *Politika*, for example, wrote: “Members of the Special Operations Unit [i.e., the Red Berets] went to war motivated, because they knew that they were fighting for Serbian interests...thus some of them perceived the arrest of the brothers Banović as a great sin... (...) Their hymn ‘Christ God!’ speaks about Serbia, Orthodox Christianity and sacrifices in wartime.”²²

That text, however, failed to mention that many of the members of the Special Operations Unit had been indicted for the most heinous war crimes. Tabloids engaged in even more heart-rending stories. Indeed, instead of writing about the crimes for which one of the Banović brothers was indicted, tabloids were swamped with emotional stories about the “great sacrifices which the Banović family made for their sons.” In the aftermath of Đinđić’s assassination the Special Operations Unit was dismantled, for it turned out that the unit’s commanders had been involved in the assassination of the Serbian prime minister. Obviously the journalists cannot be expected to have had any premonition of the subsequent turn of events, but it bears underscoring that journalists were nonetheless duty-bound to take into account and consequently publish all the relevant details about that unit.²³

The manner of covering the Hague Tribunal trials is of key importance in view of the role the Serbian media played in priming the general public for the war and the fact that several generations had been educated in the spirit of inter-ethnic hatred. After 5 October, the war-generating policy and the ensuing war crimes were relativized through various stereotypes. The mass media fuelled the stance that co-operation with the Hague Tribunal was a compulsion with certain financial consequences imposed by the international community and not a need to address the crimes committed.

The media have relativized the crimes committed in the name of the Serbian people, in order to foil the discussion on moral responsibility. This was achieved via various mechanisms, including the discrediting of witnesses, belittling the importance of an admission of guilt, that is of indictment counts, a romanticizing of war crimes indictees, expressions of empathy for the families of war crimes indictees,²⁴ daily commentary on the trials exclusively from the standpoint of the accused and their lawyers, and a total disregard for the victims of war crimes.

The printed media created a negative image of the ICTY, and above all of the prosecution. It was depicted as an incompetent judicial department. Lijiljana Smajlović, journalist of the weekly *NIN*, in her defense of work of the ICTY correspondents, said the following: “It is not true they are acting in an unprofessional manner, that is, that they are rooting for Milošević... Journalists are only transmitters of messages from the Hague. They are not responsible for the failures of the prosecution, the cynicism of the accused, or the falseness of witnesses.”²⁵ Yet, it is known that witnesses were degraded and sidelined in advance.²⁶ There were no attempts to analyze the trial in its entirety,

and notably the indictment counts and the Prosecution's arguments. The media focused on denials of the accused and not on the victims' claims. Willingly or unwillingly, journalists simply ignored the Hague Tribunal archives, which were accessible throughout the trial and prosecution arguments, and laid the emphasis on Milošević's words.

Victims were barely mentioned, because the focus was on running well-intentioned, emotional, human-angle stories about the war crimes indictees. Interlocutors were mostly the indictees' cousins, friends and members of the immediate family. Interviews with indictees themselves were reduced to their justifications or unfounded denial of crimes. Neither questions nor answers contained information about the crimes they were accused of.²⁷ After the prosecution had finished questioning the witnesses in the Milošević trial, not a single media outlet engaged in the analysis of that part of the process, which had lasted over a year, that is, in the analysis of the testimonies. One of the key features of the coverage of war crimes indictees was the smear campaign targeting those who had advocated and urged co-operation with the Hague Tribunal.²⁸

"Serious" media dealt with crimes committed against the non-Serb population during wars in former Yugoslavia, but have not tackled in an analytical manner the processes, which led to those wars. Any admission of guilt on the part of some indictees, which could have provided an incentive for such an analysis, went unnoticed, that is, was hardly covered by the local print media. The majority of the media focused rather on the bargaining process between the Hague Tribunal Prosecution and indictees relating to conditions of their prison-term serving than on crimes admitted by the war crimes indictees.²⁹

In recent years, nearly all the print media, including the independent ones which, during the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina, had toed an openly anti-war and anti-nationalistic line, have been relativizing the moral responsibility of the Serbian people by giving much exposure to those who espouse the following theses: "On the other side there were crimes too!," "Why are criminals belonging to other sides in the recent conflicts not being tried?" or to the stereotypical answers of some interlocutors: "Croats have better access to the Hague Tribunal prosecution, hence they face a smaller number of trials," and so forth. No broadcast or print media questioned the legitimacy of the Hague Tribunal and the tribunal-related topics. That holds also true of the aforementioned weeklies *NIN* and *Vreme*. However, it is also evident that a rather biased

reporting about the Hague Tribunal trials by all the media makes more difficult, and delays the process of, confronting the past in Serbia.

The Serbian revision of the anti-Fascist past,³⁰ constituting a culturological prelude to the conflicts in former Yugoslavia, was continued in the aftermath of the 2000 regime change. In some periods it grabbed the public attention, though there was no institutional response to the said revision, which did not consist of commentaries of the past, but was rather characterized by a total distortion of hard, historical facts for the sake of justification of war criminals from the nineties.

For example, the daily *Glas javnosti*, in its regular issue of 13 January 2006, distributed a special supplement, "General Nedić's Speeches," which contained a selection of speeches of the man who headed the government of national salvation during the Nazi occupation, notorious for its collaboration with the German Nazis. Those statements, speeches and manuscripts were published out of their historical context and without reference to the facts about the crimes committed against Jews, Roma, Communists and others, engineered and ordered by his very government.

The unsigned author of the supplement tried to get across the following message: "Nedić's speeches must be cherished by all Serb patriots, for those speeches teach them to honor their national duties for the sake of saving the Serb homeland and attaining a new glory for Serbhood." The author also went on to note that those speeches "make up the gist and basis of true Serbian patriotism, born of the Serbian land, the heroic spirit of Serbia, and the bitter experience of the present-day."

The uncritical stance of the Serbian nationalists about the key actors in World War Two and about the quisling government of Milan Nedić contributed to further confusion and disorientation on the part of citizens of Serbia with respect to basic postulates of the European tradition, and primarily, anti-fascism. Thus, the Serbian nationalists (most notably Kosta Čavoški) underscored that Serbs made up the bulk of the Partisan movement which together with the League of Communist Yugoslavia was most responsible for the construction of the second (socialist) Yugoslavia. That argument ran counter to the claims by some that Serbs were the stiffest opponents of Communism and that Yugoslavia for them was the "prison of nations."

Aside from a few NGOs, there was no major, official, or public response to the fact that a major Belgrade daily had run a text glorifying war criminals from Nazi times, and had thus spread hatred of mem-

bers of other nations, and activists of the anti-fascist movement. That poster was widely exploited in the political TV programs, during which some high officials of the Serbian Radical Party were allowed to praise “the virtues” of that poster-distribution, without any intervention or objection by journalists.

Glas javnosti has the same attitude toward the war crimes indictees. That daily devised a special gift for its readers: a poster-size photograph in which “an anonymous civilian” carrying a life-size poster of the most wanted fugitive from the Hague Tribunal justice, Ratko Mladić, parades alongside Serbian army soldiers during a major military show. The photograph also shows one of the officers from the column saluting Mladić. The free distribution of that poster to the Belgrade daily readers raised a series of issues of paramount importance for the process of facing up to the recent past, that is, of Serbia’s stance on the war crimes committed in the name of the Serbian people.³¹ However, all the media deliberately shunned that topic.

The same photograph had been carried on the front-page of *Glas javnosti* a week before the printing of the poster. Thus, for a whole week, that is, well in advance, the daily had tested the popular and institutional waters. Thus, the opponents of co-operation with the Hague Tribunal made use of a daily to manifest their supremacy over the pro-cooperation camp.

Similar trends may be noticed in the actions of some local media and specialized magazines. Thus, the life achievement award of the magazine for social, art and cultural issues, *Zbilja*, went to the magazine’s long-standing collaborators, including the Hague war crimes indictees, Radovan Karadžić and Vojislav Šešelj. The state bodies and the ruling bodies did not respond to that case either or to similar cases.

Spirit of the Eighties: The Unity of the Serbian Cultural and Political Space

Vestiges of stances and ideas from the recent past are also reflected in the coverage and analysis of developments in and relations with Montenegro, Bosnia-Herzegovina, the Republika Srpska entity, the minorities and the Vojvodina issue. (The issue of Kosovo, which belongs to that same group, is discussed in a separate chapter.) In those terms, the spirit of the eighties and nineties is still present, that is, the aspiration to fully implement a long-standing idea of “the unity of the Serbian cultural and spiritual space” (the undeclared and unachieved goal of

all recent wars). The print media ran only one interpretation of the recent wars in the former Yugoslavia, according to which “the threatened Serbian people only defended themselves.” In addition, the newspaper articles suggest that the Serbian state issue is yet to be resolved, which coincides with the message of the political elite.

There is extensive coverage of Republika Srpska, independently from developments in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Frequently, the fear is voiced with respect to the survival of that Bosnian entity. The media also keeps generating tension with respect to some future possibilities or even the prospect of a union between the Republika Srpska and Serbia, while in parallel the Montenegrin and Vojvodinan identities are denied.

In parallel with the final stage of the settlement of the Kosovo issue, the media has revived the theory of the resurgence of Islamic terrorism in Serbia, and the alleged Muslim aspiration to create an Islamic state in the Balkans. In fact, that media campaign was launched in the eighties and served to justify the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina and crimes against Muslims. This time around, the existence of a small group of Wahabbis in the Sandžak has been used as a kind of crowning argument of the existence of a special Muslim war against Serbia. That story was in fact launched by the Belgrade security and intelligence services and police. Such a media-orchestrated campaign is in fact indirectly targeting the Bosniak minority in the Sandžak. A stereotype about threats to the Serbian identity is still floated (it was initially used to galvanize Serbs to wage wars against their alleged enemies in the former Yugoslavia); all police actions enjoy a strong media backing and questions are raised about the true motives for such actions.

One of the basic instruments of propaganda against Muslims (above all Sandžak Bosniaks) is the conspiracy theory that the Muslim goal is to carve up Serbia. Tabloids and other weeklies every day carry conspiracy theory-related statements of diverse spin-doctors, while the “serious” media seem to consciously avoid any discussion about or analytical explanation of the emergence of Wahabbism in Serbia. Both the media and the spin doctors allege links between “Sandžak Wahabbis” and Kosovo—which fuels stereotypes about the jeopardy which the Serbian identity faces and also increases hatred of Albanians.³²

More recently, Wahabbism has been linked to the Romany population. In the text “155 Wahabbis Operate in Niš,” *Politika*’s journalist noted that “according to some police and security sources there is a marked increase in the activities of militant Muslims, ...Wahabbis in

Niš.... In recent years, Wahabbis have found a stronghold among part of the population and their network is spreading.”³³ According to the author of that text, “the emergence of Wahabbis in Niš can be linked to the arrival of Roma from Kosovo in 1999.” The author then asserted that after the 2004 March unrest against Serbs in Kosovo, “the Wahabbis stepped up their activities.” However, the journalist managed to avoid the fact that, in response to that unrest, the Niš-based Islam Aga mosque was torched. *Politika*’s journalist also attacked the imam of Niš, who, according to the daily’s “reliable” sources, “after receiving religious education in Saudi Arabia, was first named a high cleric in Sarajevo and Novi Pazar, and then transferred to Niš, along with 20 militant Muslims who enrolled at various faculties in Niš.” It is also alleged that “Wahabbism has spread considerably among students and in the Roma settlements in the Stoćni Square suburbs.” The daily’s journalist asserted further (basing his assertions on statements of undisclosed sources) that Wahabbis in Sandžak, like their counterparts in Bosnia-Herzegovina, are funded by the same sources from the Islamic world, and judging by all appearances, via Austria and Vienna: “Those groups are heftily bank-rolled...each Wahabbi gets a monthly sum of 300 or 400 Euros, a sum superior to the average pay in Serbia.” However, the author of the aforementioned text ascribed to the Niš Wahabbis only one “fault,” namely, “their specific beards and three-quarter slacks, ...and the veiled faces of their women.”

Although in the spring/summer of 2004 about 200 attacks on ethnic minorities were reported in Vojvodina, the majority of the print media maintained that “in general, the minority-related situation in Vojvodina is calm, barring only few, isolated incidents.” What is also very evident is that the press continues to fuel the anti-Hungarian mood and fear mongering relating to the possible revival of claims of autonomy in Vojvodina, the latter claims being identified as “Hungarian separatism.”³⁴ *Ekspres*, on its front-page (31 July 2004) announced under the headline “Dreaming of Greater Hungary,” an interview with a historian Jovan Pejin, notorious for his chauvinistic stands. The subtitle is in the same vein: “Vojvodina under attack by Vojvodina revisionists.” The basic thesis of Jovan Pejin, elaborated in detail in the daily *Ekspres* was that “Vojvodina autonomy advocates are acting in line with the Soros-engineered Hungarian revisionism, whose objective is the re-creation of Greater Hungary.” *Ekspres* thus acts in the spirit of the “good, old times” when it was one of the principal vehicles, if not an extended arm of the Milošević war-mongering choir, in disseminating

the idea of diverse anti-Serbian theories. Once again the Comintern, Germany, and the Vatican are accused of hatching such plots, and once again Serbs are alleged to be the oldest people in Europe. The political leaders of Vojvodinan Hungarians are named as principal advocates of the “Greater Hungarian revisionism.”

Kosovo

Instead of engaging in unbiased reporting and easing of tensions, the Belgrade media continues to overheat the public mood. For several decades now Serbian politicians and members of the cultural elite have been using the Kosovo myth to stoke nationalism. In this effort, the print and broadcast media have been the principal vehicles. Stereotypes about Kosovo and the fueling of hatred toward Albanians were the lynchpins of the Greater Serbia project and propaganda aiming to mobilize the Serbian population for the wars and justify the repression of Kosovo Albanians in the recent past. In addition, in the 1980s and 1990s Serbian politicians used the topic of Kosovo to keep the emotional tension among population at fever pitch.

Recent developments in Belgrade and Serbia, following Kosovo’s declaration of independence, demonstrated the true and highly detrimental consequences of such propaganda and a direct link between the media coverage and the produced action, when thousands of young people went on the rampage. Embassies of Western countries, shops owned by Albanians, NGO offices and even some politicians’ homes were stoned and torched, just because of their stance on the resolution of the Kosovo issue. The majority of the young people who committed such destructive acts in Belgrade, in the name of Serbia, in fact have never been to Kosovo. The picture that they had of Kosovo has been created exclusively by the Serbian media. (After a Helsinki Committee workshop with young Albanians and Serbs from Kosovo, one Belgrade female student admitted that she wanted to attend the seminar in order to dispel the many prejudices she had about Kosovo, imposed both by her family and the media).

Kosovo-related coverage is immersed in an archaic language, which also dominates other print and broadcast media news and reports. For example, the large-circulation daily *Večernje novosti* used many emotional and mythical details to describe Vojislav Koštunica’s visit to the monastery Hilandar: “He made his oath of allegiance to Kosovo. While standing in Hilandar, close to St. Simeon’s tomb and the miraculous icon

of the Three-Handed Virgin, convincing and strong words of Vojislav Koštunica resonated as a firm pledge.”³⁵

The print media continue to use derogatory and insulting adjectives when talking about Kosovo Albanians. For years now the possibility of building and sustaining a multi-ethnic society in Kosovo has been denied, and Albanians have been portrayed as savages. The foregoing in fact only served to misuse the post-1999 predicament of Kosovo Serbs. The media, notably those catering to highbrow readership, follow suit, though their editorial policy in that regard is somewhat more subtle. Indeed, they just carry the statements of members of the cultural, political and church elite, without calling them into question or challenging them. In his regular column in *Politika*, the influential commentator and military analyst Ljubodrag Stojadinović, in the text headlined “A Lesson about Defeat,” maintains the following: “Albanians fanatically believe in the efficacy of violence. In political and civilized terms, they do not believe in the reward and punishment process. As ‘poor victims,’ they acquired powerful friends, and see their role as a perfect cover for engaging in any violence.”³⁶

The influential and highly respected Belgrade historian Predrag Marković told *Večernje novosti*:

Many states, including the Ottoman, the Serbian, and several Yugoslav states, failed to build in Kosovo a stable and well-integrated society. The present-day colonial authorities resemble most the Turkish ones, as regards their benign attitude towards Albanians, and indifference toward the Serbian heritage. It is superfluous to bring back the memory of how the Albanian insurgency against the Turkish state and administration in fact heralded the end of the Ottoman Empire and the beginning of World War One. That fact indicates that the Albanian national movements tend to turn their back on their benefactors.³⁷

The tabloid manipulation is even more obvious. Yellow or gutter press tends to publicize various intelligence reports relating to a mounting terrorism by Kosovo Albanians. That kind of coverage is tantamount to a fear-mongering campaign, targeting mostly the Serbian population in Kosovo. Much insistence on the martyrdom of Serbian locals in Kosovo only clouds their real status, and often acquires the dimensions of a travesty. For example, *Inter-Nacional* on 13 April 2004 bannered the headline “THEY KILLED, HUNG AND SLAUGHTERED,” and the sub-heading “pigs, dogs and hens.” In addition, there is a faked photo of the Albanian Prime Minister, Fatos Nano and a hung

pig. And what is the implication thereof? On the third page of the text, Nano is accused of having personally smuggled arms into Kosovo for the needs of terrorists, while the sixth page of the article underscores that “in addition to a systematic destruction of the Serbian sacred religious institutions and monuments, many domestic animals were killed or mutilated...their remains were found behind the Serbian houses. In the killing of pigs Albanians mostly showed their sadistic hatred...”³⁸ Almost regularly, on the eve of the summer season, tabloids are flooded with headlines suggesting an imminent offensive of Kosovo Albanians against Serbs.

What is most characteristic of the Kosovo coverage are anti-US and anti-West stances. Here are some examples:

Djoko Kesić, editor-in-chief of *Press*:

(...) No one is particularly surprised by the stands of Lucifer’s children, the Americans and Brits. In that context most interesting is the latest strategy of Slovenia, which is currently chairing the EU Presidency. Its envoy, a murky character, called Jelko Kalcin, renowned for his charm similar to that of a Chinese merchant, during his recent visit to Belgrade, advised us in convoluted language that it would be good if Serbia were the first country to recognize the state of Kosovo (...). He is a representative of the very same country which has been fueling Shiptari terrorism for thirty years now, of the country which opened in Serbia more than 1,000 companies, while its government banned the access of any Serbian company to the Slovenian market or economy.³⁹

Dragana Matović, journalist of *Politika*:

For the first time in history, a column of refugees from Serbia, sought refuge in Croatia. Indeed, for two days all the refugee columns from Serbia were directed towards Croatia. On Saturday, two days ago, after the torching of the US Embassy in Belgrade, “our US ambassador” was instructed to move his “unprotected” staff to Croatia.... A convoy of about forty vehicles, probably not tractors and lorries, to which we Serbs are accustomed, thus left Serbia (...) But even Thachi recognizes that some Serbs are not savages... Indeed, a man called the Snake stated the following: “Primitive reactions seen in Belgrade cannot be connected to the Serbian people in Kosovo and Metohija.” And that is true. They are not connected. Primitive reactions in Belgrade are only connected to the Albanian population in Kosovo and Metohija.⁴⁰

Negative stereotypes are deeply rooted among the population at large. However, what causes even more concern is the fact that those journalists who visit Kosovo or write exclusively about Kosovo are also impacted by those negative emotions and stereotypes. Thus, they see only negative elements in Kosovo society and then transmit and impart them to the Serbian readership.

Internal Enemies and Hate Speech

In post-5 October Serbia, hate speech is not reduced only to the level of incident provoking. Indeed, its principal features are still the identification of “internal enemies” and the ensuing smear campaigns against thus-branded public personalities. There is a continuous demonization of those personalities from the civil sector and politicians who have a critical position on the recent war, Kosovo, neighbors, minorities, and advocates of the liberalization of the economy. Similar campaigns often target members of minority groups. Those campaigns are mostly engineered by tabloids, but it bears saying that they are also frequently wholeheartedly backed by the right-wing dailies and magazines. In fact, they are just a sequel to the nationalistic propaganda and hate speech from the nineties.

Another throwback to the nineties is the fact that such media coverage is not met with a strong condemnation by the dominating political and cultural elites. Moreover, there were not even attempts to establish whether such hate speech in fact generates violence and gives a green light to perpetrators of various militant and extreme actions. It also bears saying that those branded as “domestic traitors” have been exposed to serious threats and intimidation campaigns. Some were even physically assaulted.

Derogatory and even primitive phrases and virulent hate speech are used in columns and commentaries aiming to discredit those who think differently.⁴¹ On the other hand, the press has allowed members of the former regime and criminals to openly attack members of the political alternative. Thus, they feel free to voice their demands to the effect that “their political and NGO opponents” should be arrested and tried. In place is also the practice of “misplacement of thesis,” that is, advocates of liberalism are branded as militants and placed in the same bag with the militant right wing and neo-Nazi organizations.

Speaking about political and ideological opponents, Aleksandar Tijanić, one of the most influential personalities from the media sphere,

and director of the national television, stated the following in an interview to *Večernje novosti*:

That clique believes that common people are stupid, that patriotism is an incurable disease, that the state—notably the Serbian one—is passé, that territory, and notably the Serbian one, is not important, that religion—and notably the Serbian one—is obscure, and that the Cyrillic alphabet—notably the Serbian one—is unnecessary. They have set up pressure hordes which are making the rounds of TV networks, newspaper offices, various promotions, courts of law, and criticizing all those who refuse to recognize their exclusive right to physical violence (...). I suspect that such a campaign shall provoke a brutal backlash...and the mood in the streets of Serbia may become incendiary if gangs, hiding behind either democratic or patriotic slogans, start re-educating citizens.⁴²

University professor, Svetozar Stojanović, a man close to the ruling circles and collaborator of Dobrica Ćosić, the principal ideologue of “the Greater Serbia project,” endeavored to get across the following message from the pages of the Belgrade daily *Politika*: “There is a pressing need for a research institute to start monitoring and re-appraising the competence and objectivity of some public figures and then regularly inform the general public of its pertinent findings.”⁴³ He continued: “Some domestic descriptions and assessments of our circumstances for a long time have been imbued with narcissistic aggressiveness, and in parallel with provincial servility towards the decisive foreign powers and their dictates. The authors of such statements, while hyping the rise of extremism in this country, in fact thus demonstrate their deranged mental state and indicate that they should be considered genuine meta-extremists too.”

Stojanović also posed the following question to influential circles in the West: “How long will you continue to primarily rely on self-projecting assessments and predictions of a tiny minority of national (*sic!*), but quite well-off Serbs?”

The influential weekly *NIN* went as far as to run the following headline, “If you intend to see women, take a whip with you!”⁴⁴ In the text under that headline the weekly demanded that the three female presidents of local NGOs be tried because they “acted as snitches for the Hague Tribunal,” when they defended the war crimes victims who allegedly committed high treason, by having worked for “those who had busted up Greater Yugoslavia.”

Even if we disregard all the commentaries and value judgments about some public personalities, the most irksome if not altogether dangerous trait of the aforementioned kind of coverage is the production of disinformation and the consequences thereof. By reiterating lies from the propaganda of the Milošević era, the press solidifies the negative image of some personalities, previously branded as foreign spies, collaborators of enemies and Serb enemies. Some Serbs tend to fully accept such media-forged images and then channel their aggression against those “notorious” personalities. The foregoing acquired an especially dramatic dimension when some papers (notably the weekly *Tabloid*) published home addresses of stigmatized and proscribed members of the civilian sector.

The media policies and coverage amply indicate that any means can be used to weaken, taint, or sideline the political alternative. For example, during the referendum campaign for the new Constitution of Serbia, demonstrators rallied in front of the Belgrade seat of the Liberal Democratic Party (the only party which had boycotted the referendum) and threatened to demolish it, and kill its leader Čedomir Jovanović. Two days later a text ran by the Belgrade daily *Politika* noted that following: “It was a provocative and inadequate action...but at the same time it was ‘a performance of the young from Kosovo, regardless of shouts, ‘Čedo, we shall kill you!’”⁴⁵ In addition, according to the same text, “Those who had boycotted the referendum, in fact attempted to break up the community.”

Close collaborators of Zoran Đinđić became targets of a series of smear campaigns. Thus, many were accused of major financial scandals allegedly involving shady deals. But those scandals, however, remained within the media sphere. Indeed, they have never been handled by the judicial bodies as the latter are under the sway of Đinđić’s opponents and the anti-reform camp. However, those media-engineered scandals have considerably impacted the political and public life of Serbia. It also bears saying that the “scoops” or rather “leaks” relating to such affairs and scandals were in fact politically motivated.

Even the media with liberal leanings echoed the very same slanders against “domestic traitors and corrupt politicians.” Instead of resorting to an in-depth analysis of the contents of tabloids, and the principal goals of their editorial policy, to uncover their true motives for such lurid stories, many liberal journalists expended much energy and time on a bevy of interviews in which there was much reiteration of questions centering on the slanders.

Media and the Vision of Serbia's Future—Advocacy of the Anti-European Option

Since the ouster of Slobodan Milošević (2000), Serbia has declared its intention to accede to Euro-Atlantic integration. That orientation, notably as regards the European Union (the stance on NATO is much more reserved), is backed by the majority of citizens. In the past eight years all the public opinion polls indicated that accession to the EU is backed by 65–75% of citizens. However, that Euro-enthusiasm of citizens is not shared by the media, which especially in the past two years have given extensive exposure to those political prime movers, analysts and commentators who call into question, as they put it, that “unilateral” orientation of Serbia.

In parallel with the strengthening of the conservative-nationalist camp embodied in the Serbian Radical Party, and in the populist coalition composed of the Democratic Party of Serbia and New Serbia, criticism of “the policy of conditioning,” allegedly pursued by the EU with respect to Serbia, grew exponentially. The EU was continually lambasted as an exponent of US policy on the continent, and as an entity openly meddling in the internal affairs of Serbia, which was tantamount to “undermining of the national dignity and pride of Serbia.”

The influential strategist of Greater Serbian nationalism and renowned author, Dobrica Ćosić, has said:

The future which they offer us is a dictated future...They are anew trying to make us happy with their ideological commands. Once it was done by the Bolshevik bureaucrats and now it is done by the Euro bureaucrats. The methods and conduct of Brussels-minded persons are quite similar to those, which once characterized the Kremlin's supporters.... At play is our non-acceptance of limited sovereignty. If we are to unite with the united Europe, we must renounce part of our sovereignty, but in that process we cannot renounce our identity and our geographical, anthropological, cultural and creative distinct features... In my mind, there are elements of the Orwellian ideology in the current process of the EU creation, and thus it may turn out to be only the EU-utopia.⁴⁶

A new anti-European “star” in the media firmament of Serbia, Miloš Jovanović, an analyst in the Institute for International Politics and Economy, tried to interpret (according to him a fully justified) ill-will of some representatives of the incumbent authorities, notably of Prime

Minister Vojislav Koštunica and his close circle towards the EU integrations:

As understandable to all those who think that we are not the only creators of our misfortune. All those who remember how much the EU has contributed to the wars and the ensuing misfortune in former Yugoslavia by its crazy and wrong recognition of the Slovenian and Croatian independence cannot speak with a smile on his or her face about EU integrations. Some may even say that such past gestures should not be discussed. Even if we shared that opinion, there still remains the issue of Kosovo and Metohija and the EU role in the resolution of the status of the Southern Serbian province. Moreover, Serbia, because of its recent past and present, cannot share the other European countries' stance on the EU.⁴⁷

Since the formation of the first Koštunica-led government in 2004, Serbia has in fact slowed down its progress toward EU integration. And in justification of this policy, new reasons and justifications are constantly being invented. First Belgrade assessed as "a mounting pressure," the renewed Hague Tribunal demands for the hand-over of war crimes indictees, in the first place, of Ratko Mladić. Then, in 2006 the Montenegrin referendum on independence became a reason for stalling the accession to the EU. Though the EU since the year 2000, practically sided with the Serbian elite and, in full opposition to the wishes of the Montenegrin authorities, helped cobble together the state union of Serbia and Montenegro, and even set an extremely high referendum threshold for the independence of Montenegro, the most influential Belgrade media launched a veritable smear campaign against the "EU bureaucrats" after the success of the referendum. The general assessment was that "Djukanović's slap to Belgrade was made possible thanks to the generous assistance of the international community." That bitterness was evident in the editorial run by the Belgrade weekly *NIN*: "the greatest Brussels skeptic, Javier Solana, cheerfully denied any possibility of objection and congratulated Lipkin (an EU special envoy at the Montenegrin referendum) for his good services."⁴⁸ Finally, the international community, primarily the US and Europe, were singled out as the principal culprits in the 2007 process relating to the determination of the status of Kosovo.

The foregoing makes us conclude that all the above were pretexts for catalyzing an openly anti-West and anti-EU mood, which peaked, in the first months of 2008. Although the EU in the meantime resumed

negotiations on the Stabilization and Association Agreement, and later first concluded them and then in late April signed the SAA, in spite of Belgrade's failure to fully comply with the condition of the hand-over the Hague indictees, the manipulation of the public mood took quite an opposite direction. Aside from the irrational dimensions of courting Russia (in the course of 2007, the Russian President was made an honorary citizen of 10 localities and townlets and received much media coverage, with his blown-up photos carried at mass rallies), commentators and analysts kept reiterating and underscoring that the EU was not the only choice for Serbia. Thanks to the hyping of the thesis that in Serbia a referendum on the geostrategic orientation of the country has never been carried out, that the EU is constantly making new demands, that it is in the interest in Serbia to equally develop relations with the East and the West, that the most powerful international players, the US and EU, have an arrogant stance on Serbia, the general public was in fact primed for the U-turn which ultimately led to the dissolution of the government, the sharp polarization of the electorate and much public confusion.

A regular contributor to *Politika*, Branko Milinović, a colleague of the Washington-based Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, thus recently noted in his text which ran on the front-page of Belgrade's daily: "The Serbian body politic is clearly divided in the two arithmetic halves."⁴⁹ He then went on to say that for years now he was opposing Serbia's aspirations to join the EU, despite economic advantages of membership of the most important continental union. Milinović then clarified his position: "My opposition to Serbia's EU membership is based on my assessment that such an accession would cause a great political destabilization of Serbia....because the issue of EU integration, which once united all and sundry, has recently become the most divisive political issue in Serbia."⁵⁰

Anti-European mood generated by the media peaked in the last few months thus flying in the face of an increasing number of Brussels good-will gestures. EU-related commentaries were tinged with cynicism and rife with accusations that "Europe does not understand the strength of Serbian emotions regarding Kosovo." According to the influential former editor-in-chief of *Politika*, Ljiljana Smajlović:

The Western press agencies interpret the Brussels proposal for the signing of the SAA as a trade off for Serbia's imminent loss of Koso-

vo...but that offer shall not be perceived as a generous one even by the EU-enthusiasts. But here is a proposal of mine: if Ollie Rehn wants to soothe our anger and resentment over the loss of Kosovo, perhaps he could suggest to his European colleagues the following compensations: St. Paul's Cathedral in London, Notre Dame in Paris, and in a good measure, Escorial in Spain.⁵¹

In late 2007 and early 2008 in the anti-EU media campaign, which was sporadically tantamount to calls for a lynch, the principal target was Slovenia (from the 1st of January 2008 heading the EU Presidency) and its highest state officials. *Politika*'s correspondent from Ljubljana, Svetlana Vasović Mekina, denounced the Slovenian foreign policy and diplomacy as "obedient cronies of Washington." The 24 January 2008 issue of *Politika* ran a transcript of confidential talks between a high Slovenian official, Mitja Drobnič, and Daniel Freed and other State Department officials held in December 2007 in Washington. The contents of those talks centering on the coordination of the EU and US efforts with respect to the declaration of independence of Kosovo, were described in the text headlined: "Washington dictates, Europe takes on the role of an extra."⁵² But it bears mentioning that the "scoop" had been posted a day earlier on the site of the Government of the Republic of Serbia.

After the ouster of Slobodan Milošević, Svetlana Vasović Mekina continued to cover Slovenian developments and its top officials, Janez Drnovšek, Dimitrije Rupel, Janez Janša, Jelko Kalcin, in a cynical, mocking and insulting manner. She is a very productive journalist and often writes editorials. On the day when all the print media ran reports on the SAA signing, *Politika* ran Mekina's column headlined "Signature on the (dis)agreement" in which she summed up the responses of the domestic public to that act in a rhetoric manner: "Is this agreement a blessing or a curse in disguise?" Svetlana Vasović Mekina is the recipient of *Politika*'s award for journalism and of the annual, 2007 award of the state-run Association of Journalists of Serbia.

As regards the above mentioned SAA signing, the media scene indeed became schizophrenic. That act was derided and belittled by most tabloids (*Kurir*'s impertinent report was headlined "A sell-out" and had a sub-heading "The Serbian pigs are gloating," above the photograph of signatories, President of Serbia, Boris Tadić, and Vice Prime Minister, Božidar Djelić.). Other dailies in the name of alleged objectivity and neutrality carried both positive and negative assessments of that signing.

Conclusion

This research shows that media did not represent a force for change but rather constituted a basis for the rehabilitation of the old regime and the transformation of its legacy into political normality. They failed to play a critical role and raise important issues relating to the reform of the system. On the contrary, the media played a role in the radicalization of Serbia and contributed to confusion among citizens.

The Serbian media, especially the most influential—Radio Television Serbia (RTS) and the daily *Politika*—followed the national-conservative politics that was personalized by Vojislav Koštunica after 2000 (first as president of the defunct Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and then as two-time premier of Serbia). Despite the fact that the project of Greater Serbia was militarily defeated, the message sent via the media, by persisting on the same political propaganda and stereotypes is that Greater Serbia as a goal has only been postponed.

Conservative values and populism have dominated both in the form and the essence of the message. The media has played an enormous role in delaying the process of the modernization of Serbia and its integration in European Union.

In extraordinary parliamentary elections in May 2008, contrary to the attempt to navigate public opinion by the influential nationalist media, the citizens of Serbia opted for the pro-European politics of the coalition *For a European Serbia* led by the Democratic Party. However, it is too early to tell whether this will lead to changes in media editorial policy. That issue remains for further analyses.

Notes

- ¹ “Who are the true media owners and who controls the public word in Serbia,” Centar za istraživačko novinarstvo, *NUNS* 13 April 2007, at <http://www.cins.org.rs/press/?p=433> [accessed on May 29 2010].
- ² Independent Association of Journalists disclosed that the media reported in 2006, that behind the ownership transformation of a large-circulation daily, *Večernje novosti* (Belgrade), were the Serb tycoons, Miroslav Mišković and his company “Delta holding” and Milan Beko, both former members of Milošević’s government, and later managers of “lucrative” businesses. Centar za istraživačko novinarstvo, *NUNS* <http://www.cins.org.rs>.
- ³ *Identitet*, in its 10 March 2003 issue, just two days before Djindjić’s assassination ran a text headlined “Đinđić—a target of a sniperman, the Hague Serbs ordered assassination.” The paper disclosed that identical material, which gave birth to the said text, was forwarded to other media houses and the District Public Prosecutor by the Radical Party leader, before his surrender to the Hague Tribunal. It was obviously a confidential, intelligence material which came into possession of agents, ‘Laufer,’ ‘Maks,’ ‘Milutin,’ and others.” Two weeks before the assassination of Prime Minister Djindjić, “*Identitet*” ran a text without by-line, abounding in details about the manner of safe-guarding of Prime Minister, number of his bodyguards, number of security vehicles, and also details about his security apparatus in both his residence and office.
- ⁴ “Medijska slika Zorana Djindjica” in *Zoran Djindjić: Etika odgovornosti*, (Belgrade: Helsinski odbor za ljudska prava u Srbiji, 2006), p. 251
- ⁵ *Danas* (Belgrade) 24 February 2004, the text “Pogodne pretnje za praznjenje agresije,” at www.danas.co.rs [access on 29 May 2010].
- ⁶ “Medijska slika Zorana Djindjića” in *Zoran Djindjić*, p. 258. That quotation from taken from the site of the Socialist Party of Serbia, or magazine *Blic News*, no. 11 of July 2001. Since then the quotation was taken off the site.
- ⁷ At play are still strong attempts to deny the indictment in its totality, but the media accusations now focus on alleged mafia connections of Đjindjić’s close collaborators. But it also bears underscoring that in the meantime a circle of those who dare not deny the reform-inclined role of Đjindjić has widened.
- ⁸ *Blic Online* (Belgrade), 1 December 2005, www.blic.co.rs [accessed on 29 May 2010].
- ⁹ Head of Press Bureau in Zoran Djindjić’s government.
- ¹⁰ *Nacional* (Belgrade), 10 September 2002. A quotation from “Meidjska slika Zorana Djindjića” in *Zoran Djindjić: Etika odgovornosti*, p. 268.
- ¹¹ *Blic* (Belgrade) 7 September 2002.
- ¹² *Večernje novosti* (10 October 2002).

- ¹³ *Blic* (29 January 2003).
- ¹⁴ Dušan Spasojević, a member of the Zemun clan and one of those indicted for assassination of the Serb Prime Minister.
- ¹⁵ *Vreme* (Belgrade), 30 January 2003.
- ¹⁶ "The Press—unchanged matrix" *Helsinki Committee*, Belgrade, 2004, www.helsinki.org.rs [accessed on 29 May 2010].
- ¹⁷ "Proceedings Before Domestic Courts" in *Human Rights: Hostage to the State's Regression*, Helsinki Committee, Belgrade, pp.134-148; at www.helsinki.org.rs [accessed on 29 May 2010].
- ¹⁸ *Politika* (Belgrade), 4 May 2004.
- ¹⁹ *Večernje novosti* (11 May 2004).
- ²⁰ "Proceedings Before Domestic Courts" in *Human Rights: Hostage to the State's Regression*, pp.134-148.
- ²¹ Human Rights in the Shadow of Nationalism, *Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Serbia*, Belgrade 2002, www.helsinki.org.rs [accessed on 29 May 2010].
- ²² *Politika* (11 November 2001).
- ²³ Media coverage of that case is more broadly discussed in "Meidjska slika Zorana Djindjića" in *Zoran Djindjić: Etika odgovornosti*.
- ²⁴ *Inter-Nacional* dispels yet another "prejudice about Radovan Karadžić's bodyguards," by claiming that "they are not giants devouring tons of mutton meat. They are semi-vegetarians who like the Serbian soldiers in the WW1 subsist on cheese and corn flour, and are very mobile like Ghurkas." ("The Press—unchanged matrix").
- ²⁵ *Vreme*, no. 607 (22 August 2002).
- ²⁶ Testimonies of numerous witnesses were ridiculed by the Serb press, though from the legal standpoint they were well founded and of key importance for the ICTY trials. Jurists and legal experts who tried to objectively analyse the Milošević trial were totally ignored by the media.
- ²⁷ The same model is applied in interviews with high officials of the Socialist Party of Serbia and Milošević regime officials. After 5 October they became accessible for the media. Thus, thanks to some print media there was a veritable hyperinflation of Milošević era personalities, or of the Socialist Party and Radical Party officials. Some of them were frequent guests of prime time and high-rated TV programs.
- ²⁸ Journalist of *Balkan* talks with evident warmth with Persida Šljivančanin, the wife of the accused Veselin, and re-focuses on the government officials who effected the arrest: "When Veselin was arrested, Sreten Lukić and Čeda Jovanović were sitting in their parked BMW, in front of our building...I learnt that they wanted to do him in a month before the arrest. An expert sniper was ordered to kill him...on sight. I don't know why they changed their plan....probably because of cash, for they get a lot if they hand over the suspect alive." (*Balkan*, 10 April 2004 quoted from "The Press—unchanged matrix").

- ²⁹ There is no coverage of the character of committed crimes and admission of the indicted war criminals. Most texts focus on alleged deals with the Hague Tribunal. The most conspicuous example thereof is the coverage of the case of Milan Babić, former President of Republika Srpska Krajina, the Serb-controlled part of Croatia, in which mass crimes were committed during the war. Zorana Suvaković, journalist of *Politika*, with the sub-heading “Special status for Milan Babić” and headline “Award for Co-operation,” underscored the aforementioned “deal.” She ironically noted: “The news that one detainee was not where the others were compelled to be, spread across the Scheveningen detention unit...That detainee is Milan Babić, former president of Republika Srpska Krajina, whose testimony at the Milošević trial, denoting his high co-operative-ness, earned him an automatic pass for special benefits.” (*Politika*, 27 March 2004, quoted from “The Press – unchanged matrix”).
- ³⁰ At play is a trend of revision of the anti-Fascist history of Serbia, in which key actors of the anti-Fascist movement are depicted as criminals, and instigators and perpetrators of crimes as national heroes. That process of re-shaping public opinion was kicked off in the late Eighties, and peaked in the first half of the nineties, when such ideology dominated the wars in former Yugoslavia and inspired mass crimes against the non-Serb population.
- ³¹ One of the questions is how it was possible that an “anonymous civilian” walked undisturbed into the officers’ column and paraded alongside them all the while hoisting a life-size poster of the most wanted war crimes indictee, Ratko Mladić, during a carefully organized and coreographed show of promotion of the new generation of officers of the Serb army.
- ³² Report of the Helsinki Committee “New wave of anti-Islamism serves to relativize the Serb responsibility,” 2007, www.helsinki.org.rs [accessed on 29 May 2010].
- ³³ “U Nišu 155 vehabija” (photo of a mosque in Niš: “Islam Agina džamija, mesto gde uz ostale vernike dolaze i vehabije” *Politika* (27 April 2007).
- ³⁴ “The Press–unchanged matrix.”
- ³⁵ *Večernje novosti* (18 September 2006).
- ³⁶ *Politika* (11 June 2004).
- ³⁷ Quoted from “The Press–unchanged matrix.”
- ³⁸ Ibid.
- ³⁹ *Press* (19 February 2008); and www.helsinki.org.rs [accessed on 29 May 2010].
- ⁴⁰ *Politika* (27 February 2008); and www.helsinki.org.rs [accessed on 29 May 2010].
- ⁴¹ “The media–An unchanged blueprint,” www.helsinki.org.rs [accessed on 29 May 2010].
- ⁴² *Večernje novosti* (6 April 2008).
- ⁴³ *Politika* (20 January 2004).

⁴⁴ *NIN* (Belgrade), 25 March 2004.

⁴⁵ The text “Razaranje zajednice” *Politika* (26 October 2006) has the following lead-in: “The referendum boycott campaign spearheaded by Čedomir Jovanović two nights ago met with the response, in the shape of *performance of the young from the North of Kosovo*. Students of Kosovska Mitrovica University and the youth branch of the Serb National Council of North Kosovo shouted ‘We shall kill Chedo,’ and ridiculed and insulted his allies in the *struggle against the new Constitution and in the struggle for an independent Kosovo*” (Nataša Mičić, Nenad Čanak, Sonja Biserko, Nataša Kandić and Goran Svilanović.)

⁴⁶ *Večernje novosti*, 9, 10, 11, and 12 June 2006.

⁴⁷ *Politika* (24 January 2007).

⁴⁸ *Nin* (1 June 2006).

⁴⁹ *Politika* (17 April 2008).

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ *Politika* (4 January 2008).

⁵² *Politika* (24 January 2008).

We All Live Two Lives: Serbian Cinema & Changing Values in Post Yugoslavia

Andrew Horton

*“Next week we continue our
tale of the sunken Slav tribe.”
Rasha in Hadersfield (2007)*

Film has the power to inspire, to incite, to provoke, to change the way we think. A “war film” can encourage the viewer to identify with one side or the other, or to blame outsiders, or to view war as something which simply happens. Films can promote civic values or nationalist hatred, they can encourage the viewer to view women as sexual objects or promote a culture of gender equality, and they can foster tolerance or promote intolerance. Film is a powerful medium directly relevant to the values which exist or come to exist in a society. In Serbia today, the cinematic sector can play a role in bringing Serbian society closer to the European mainstream in culture and attitudes.

Three Serbian cinematic moments to start us off:

- A crippled young Belgrade man sits in a wheel chair talking to a video camera, crying out, “I look like an ordinary guy, but that’s not true!” and as soon as the camera stops shooting, the young man stands up clearly showing he is not crippled as he talks to his friend, the cameraman.

- A bus with an odd collection of characters is pulling into an old Yugoslav hotel near Tito’s birthplace by a beautiful Croatian lake. The female guide speaks to the group who are contestants for the Yugoslav “Noble Deed of the Year Competition” and she tells the group, “We all live two lives, normal and as ‘Heroes of Yugoslavia.’” As the film continues, we see everything break down and the war that broke up Yugoslavia begin.

- A sweeping view of Belgrade and a middle aged man standing by the river with a pistol as we hear him in voice over: “None of this should have happened.” We fade into a flashback as we continue to hear him,

“That’s why I’m trying to do the right thing now.” By the film’s end he will be murdered for his actions.

In this brief study, I wish to consider both the changing nature of cinema and values—personal and cultural—in Serbia since the Yugoslav wars of the 1990s when Marshal Josip Broz Tito’s Socialist Yugoslavia ended in 1991 when Slovenia and Croatia became independent, to 2003 when the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia of Slobodan Milošević’s rule ended and was transformed into the Union of Serbia and Montenegro and finally, to the moment of Montenegro’s independence, leaving only the Republic of Serbia. More specifically, I wish to focus on three particular areas of Serbian films in recent years. The first is films that specifically deal with the war and its effects, the next group concerns those films about life after the war in Belgrade and Serbia and how people are trying to get on with life, and finally those films that clearly embrace a Hollywood approach in style, content, and message and thus seem to “go beyond” anything particularly concerned with Serbia and the past.

Before turning directly to these topics, however, it is important to note that in dealing with the values of a country and its people as reflected in cinema, much depends on informed interpretation rather than straight statistics and facts. Let us simply consider Hollywood in 2007 as an example. The United States in 2007 was (and still is in 2009) at war in Iraq with many other international and national difficulties being played out in the “war against terrorism.” In cinema, the Oscars in 2007 went particularly to the Coen Brothers’ *No Country For Old Men* and Paul Thomas Anderson’s *There Will Be Blood*. Clearly both films bring up issues of violence in America and American values associated with how to deal with violence in relationships, communities, politics, and religion. And yet, it would be important to point out that, beyond the Oscars, there is the statistic of which film made the most money in 2007 and that was Tim Hill’s *Alvin and the Chipmunks*. A comedy for children?! A discussion of 2007 in Hollywood would thus suggest that if the awards go to films reflecting values under pressure and change, more Americans have voted, with *Alvin*—for comedy and films that children appreciate—a fact that could be discussed as both a transcending of current conflicts and hardships or as a way of avoiding facing up to the tragedies and problems that surround us all. Of course, we should also recognize that moviegoers

everywhere in the world are looking for entertainment that often takes them away from their present realities.

Add one last note of preface that Hollywood has seldom made films that directly take on the wars it is currently been involved in especially if they are being critical or satirical. During the Viet Nam war, for instance, everyone “got” that Robert Altman’s *M*A*S*H* (1970) reflected Viet Nam in many satirical ways even though it was set during the Korean War, but the only semi-popular Hollywood film that was set in the Viet Nam war period itself was John Wayne’s *The Green Berets* (1968) which, as critic Roger Ebert wrote at the time, “...is offensive not only to those who oppose American policy but even to those who support it.”¹

Overview of the Cinema That was Yugoslav

The film industry that evolved in the former Yugoslavia was an unusual one in that it embraced both popular entertainment and artistic filmmaking. Yugoslavia’s mixture of self-governing socialism and capitalistic practices as well with a wide freedom of expression allowed filmmakers throughout the country to make a truly diverse and open-minded series of films with filmmakers such as Dušan Makavejev, Aleksandar Petrović, Živojen Pavlović, Emir Kusturica, Rajko Grlić, Goran Marković, and Srdjan Karanović becoming well known throughout the world.

Filmmakers won awards at international film festivals such as Cannes, Venice, Montreal, Berlin, Karlovy Vary, Istanbul, in Hollywood and elsewhere, while also pleasing a home audience with high box office numbers. Hollywood traditionally supplies eight or nine of the top ten films in most countries every year, including in nations such as Britain, France and Germany. But, until the very end of its existence, Yugoslavia often had four or five local films in the top ten, and this phenomenon continues in Serbia today. In 1991, for instance, Srdjan Karanović’s *Virgina* (Virdžina, 1991) outsold *Terminator 2* in Yugoslavia, and *Zone* (*Zona zamfirova*, 2002) by Zdravko Sotra was seen by a million people in three months in 2002.² As Daniel J. Goulding has noted, the Yugoslav film community before 1991, “...exemplified the strengths as well as the fragility inherent in multiple and diverse nations and nationalities attempting to forge a supranational site of cultural identity...”³ Then came the wars of the 1990s and the end of Yugoslavia by 2003.

I have written on the emerging cinemas of each of the former Yugoslav republics: Croatia, Serbia, Slovenia, Macedonia, and Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo, legally a Serbian province until February 2008, as they have flourished or declined in recent years.⁴ But as I begin to look specifically here at Serbian cinema of the past 12-18 years, I would add that Serbia is being affected by the same media changes around the world. These include the shrinking numbers of cinemas and public viewing screens, the rise of DVDs and pirated DVDs as the principal means of viewing films along with the direct release to television (or soon after a short theatrical run) for a feature film. In 1983, for instance, Yugoslavia had over 1,280 cinemas and currently, Serbia has only 140 cinemas with 46 of them in Belgrade.⁵

Serbia, Cinema and Changing Values Personal and Political

With a focus on changing values, let us return to our opening trilogy of images before taking a closer look at Serbian films concerned with war, survival post war and with simply going beyond it all into new spaces and values.

"I look like an ordinary guy but that's not true," comes from the main character in the first of seven stories within Miroslav Momčilović's *Seven and a Half* (*Sedam i po*, 2006) each of which takes on one of the seven deadly sins, in this case, "greed." The film looks at contemporary Belgrade life as everyone is caught trying to live in a world of conflicting and overlapping values that often contradict each other.

In short, in this directing debut film by Momčilović who scripted the previously popular ironic comedy *When I Grow Up I'll be a Kangaroo* (*Kad porastem biću Kengur*, 2004), we the audience are set up for a world in which we can't trust anyone or anything we see or hear.

"We all live two lives, normal and as 'Heroes of Yugoslavia'!" is expressed in the opening of Slobodan Šijan's *S.O.S. (Spasite naše duše*, 2007) written by Miloš Radović. Set in 1991 just before the fighting began between Serbia and Croatia.

S.O.S. sets up the idealized world of Tito's Yugoslavia and normal people in typical occupations who are chosen in a contest to be heroes and then contrasts it with a number of subplots in which every aspect of "Yugoslavia" and its "mythology" collapses by the film's end as a fiddle player sings, "It's the end of Tito's era!" just as the guns start going off.



Scene from Slobodan Šijan's *S.O.S* (2007)

Photo Slobodan Šijan

In this sense, the title *S.O.S.*—Save Our Souls—is both a statement and a plea as Yugoslavia as a political reality and a “mythical” creation both cease to exist and everyone is on his/her own to figure out their own values and goals.

“None of this should have happened. That’s why I’m trying to do the right thing now,” is the opening cry of the main character in Srdjan Golubović’s popular film, *The Trap* (*Klopka*, 2007) whose values are to do the right thing to save his son’s life who needs an expensive medical operation in Germany. However, the clash in his values is that he is ready to murder to get the money and this leads to his downfall in this thriller structured much like a Hollywood film noir.

With these examples, therefore, we are set up for three takes on “values” in a changing Serbia: they include personal values formed knowing you can’t trust anyone for being who they appear to be, next having to live your life with several sets of values for “ordinary” existence and for something “better,” and finally being forced to cast away all previous values—personal and traditionally cultural/religious to get what you think you want and need.

Serbian Cinema Focused on the Wars of the 1990s

If we have noted that Hollywood shies away from films that are directly involved with current wars, there are some significant Serbian films that appeared in the 1990s as the wars were in progress in the former Yugoslavia.⁶

We begin with an approach to cinema that has been a significant one throughout the development of Yugoslav cinema and, indeed, in the culture of the Balkan nations in general. I am referring to the use of comic and ironic perspectives taken on tragic realities.⁷ It is worth remembering, for instance, that at the conclusion of Plato's, *Symposium* Socrates and Aristophanes agree that there is a point where tragedy and comedy often meet and cross. In this spirit, Željimir Žilnik created in his typical "no budget" style, a fake documentary ("mocumentary" as they call them now), *Tito for the Second Time Among the Serbs* (*Tito po drugi put medju srbima*, 1994) as he had an actor dress up like Marshal Josip Broz Tito and return from the dead to Belgrade to talk to the people about how the country is doing. Žilnik, a veteran radical director by the time the wars began with such successful films as *Early Works* (*Rani radovi*, 1969), had teamed up with small production companies formed by friends—such as Terra Films and, in this case, the well known alternative Belgrade Radio B-92—to make low budget films that could reach audiences with a definite point of view without his being arrested or imprisoned.⁸ Žilnik himself has commented how "underground" such a film became as video copies were distributed not only all over Serbia but all over the former Yugoslavia and Europe. What Žilnik succeeded in doing at that time in Belgrade under the increasing repression of the Milošević regime, was to help open up a dialogue on "what's going on?" in a way that the alternative Radio B-92 was doing on the air. Everyone who saw the film knew that "Tito" was an actor, but in making a documentary in such a "carnavalesque" way, Žilnik was able to do more than a straight, say, CNN-styled documentary could do. Put another way, no one living in Serbia at the time could make a real documentary that was critical of Milošević or the nationalistic forces in power. Therefore, rather than make an engaged film such as Michael Moore's *Fahrenheit 9/11*, Žilnik was able to reach a large audience which understood the humor of the set up and the fact that, in dealing with Tito, they were also discussing the current situation. His film was thus, in its own way, one of the many protests against the dangers of an unchecked Serbian nationalism fanned

by Milošević's speeches and movements such as his "No one will ever dare beat you again" speech made to the Serbs of Kosovo in 1987.⁹

If we turn now to strongly dramatic films concerned with the war and its conflicting values, one of the most memorable films was Boro Drašković's harrowing *Vukovar* (*Vukovar poste restante/Vukovar-jedna priča*, 1994). Focusing on a mixed couple—Croatian wife, Anna, and Serbian husband, Toma—in this once mixed but largely Serbian populated city in Croatia, the film traces the unfolding horrors of the 1991 war leading to the destruction of the city and the harmony that had once existed. Drašković who is equally at home in the theater, also echoes Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* in this tale of love that cannot survive the plunder, bombing, rape and greed that war unleashes. As *Variety* critic Allen Young wrote, "The marriage becomes a Capulet-Montague combat even before the wedding party reaches the reception, with marching columns of Croats and Serbs sending the celebrants running."¹⁰

Drašković's film uses the strong and tragic irony of a new Croatian—Serbian marriage taking place as Serbs and Croats began to destroy each other and the shared past they had had before. In powerful images presented in the film, there is, for instance, the contrasting beauty of the city and landscape in early shots with an aerial view of the absolute destruction by the film's end. Add to this that, while traditionally war films have shown us mostly male soldiers killing male soldiers, Drašković includes a devastating scene in which Serbian soldiers rape Anna, the Croatian wife, in her home, a scene that accurately reflects the horror of recent wars especially.

In terms of values, *Vukovar* is equally powerful for not degenerating into a simplistic "us against them" polemic film. Rather, Drašković leaves his audience with a troubling feeling of "look what we have done to ourselves" and since the ending comes as there is no end at that time to the war, our last feeling is that of "Why?" which is, of course, an appeal to an examination of all values involved that led to such a "marriage" becoming a "war."

Srdjan Dragojević likewise took an overview of the war that gave voice to the horrors it and the Milošević regime caused for friends and families that were split between Serbs and non-Serbs in *Pretty Village Pretty Flame* (*Lepa sela lepo gore*, 1996). Made shortly after the Dayton Peace Agreement ending the Bosnian War, *Pretty Village Pretty Flame* follows two friends, one Serb, Milan, and one Bosnian Muslim, Halil, through the horrors of the war and is particularly focused on a

mountain tunnel that was originally supposed to connect Bosnia with the rest of Yugoslavia but which was never finished. Thus, instead of being a tunnel, it is actually a cave (clearly this can be seen as a metaphor for Yugoslavia too, which was “never completed”). Beginning in an army hospital in Belgrade and flashing back to Milan and Halil’s youth and also to the war, Dragojević shows the atrocities committed by both sides (“War is a whore” says one character), ending with murder in a Belgrade hospital. There is even an American female journalist caught in the midst of it all who is clearly a fish out of water trying to understand what is happening in the Balkans. Milošević was still firmly in power when the film was released, and Dragojević thus makes no real attempt to show Serbia’s full responsibility for war crimes or to go beyond the easy message of war is hell. Yet, on the other hand, there is no effort in the film to suggest that Serbia was justified in its torching of villages, or the murdering and rape of thousands of “the enemy.” The moral ambiguity of the film pervades the whole story as Milan remarks midway through while helping to burn Bosnian villages, “Pretty villages are pretty when they burn.”

The lack of a pro-nationalist stand in a film that became a commercial blockbuster in Serbia, says a lot about the positive values a filmmaker such as Dragojević felt in expressing his questioning of the horror unfolding around him. As critic Ray Pride notes, “Welcome to former Yugoslavia. Or Bosnia. Or Hell. The land wants blood, and blood it shall have.”¹¹ But filmmakers such as Dragojević and Drašković, while not pointing a finger at who is to blame for destruction engulfing the world they once knew, are clearly not picking religious, racial or political sides of Serbs against Bosnians, Croats or others. Similarly, Bosnian Muslim filmmakers such as Danis Tanović of Bosnia who won the 2001 Best Foreign Film Oscar for *No Man’s Land* focuses on common soldiers on both sides caught up in the war who don’t “get” why they are fighting and even discover they have been dating the same girl in a small Bosnian town.

“We all live two lives” becomes the reality for all former Yugoslavs caught up in the unfolding chaos around them, but the question is, in each case, which two or more lives are they living? Besides films made about the actual war, it is important to mention Rajko Grlić’s award winning action-comic-drama *Border Post* (*Karaula*, 2006) that is set in pre-war Macedonia on the Albanian border with a Yugoslav army unit. Grlić, who is Croatian but who has worked closely with former Yugoslav filmmakers from each country, especially with Srdjan

Karanović of Serbia, since they were classmates at the FAMU film school in Prague in the 1960s along with others such as Goran Marković, Goran Paskalević, Lordan Zafronović, represents the strong positive values of international cooperation between the former countries as his film was co-produced by companies in Serbia, Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia, Great Britain, Macedonia, France and Austria.



Toni Gojanović as Sinisa (left) and Sergej Trifunović as Ljuba (in *Border Post*)

****Rajko Grlić's *Border Post* photograph**

Thus in this post-war period, *Border Post* must be considered partially a Serbian production even if made in Macedonia by a Croat. That the film was a large box office and critical success in each of the former Yugoslav countries says a lot about the possibilities of future cooperation in co-productions.

Quite simply, the plot of *Border Post* goes even further than the films already mentioned in not focusing on politics, nationality or religion. The blame for a breakdown in peace on the Albanian border in this wryly dark tale is based on a true story of a Bosnian officer who kept his unit together on the border once he discovered he had syphilis and

didn't want his wife to find out. Such an awkward situation leads to the beginning of armed conflict on the border as each character is shown trying to live out several lives with different values. Grlić's statement for this plot says much about so many of the films made during and since the war. According to Grlić:

On the eve of any natural disaster, be it a summer storm or a total cataclysm, there is always a moment of total silence. It is that fine moment when everything stops, but also the moment when no one wants to talk about it. It happens to nature, to societies, and to entire civilizations. *Border Post* is a comedy taking place at one such moment. The film enquires about those people, who were to transform in a matter of months into soldiers, refugees, victims and criminals. How did they live? What did they really want? What was the everyday life that engendered war and who were the ones who had war implanted into their minds so quickly and so easily?¹²

Certainly during late 1940s through to the early 1960s many of the "war" films being produced and made in Yugoslavia were "Partisan Films" that celebrated the World War II victories of Tito's army and the Yugoslav people over the Nazis. However, in this post-Milošević time and even during the war years of the 1990s as we have suggested, many filmmakers have echoed Grlić's statement that they are exploring how such disasters came about and what did and do ordinary people want in their lives.

The View of a Changing Belgrade During and Post War

As Sabrina Petra Ramet has written (in 1995), "It will be years before the full consequences of the war will be known," but many Serbian films made in recent years have focused in one way or another on the effects of war in and around Belgrade and thus on the civilian rather than military population.¹³ Certainly part of the changing culture of post war Serbia has had to do with the hundreds of thousands of citizens who have fled the country over the years including many filmmakers. But it is actually impressive how many established and emerging filmmakers have remained or, if gone for a period, have returned to Belgrade. Among these are members of the so-called "Prague group" mentioned earlier who studied together in the Czech Republic during the exciting and turbulent late 1960s and returned to Belgrade to work in both film and television as well as at the universities teaching since then.

Consider Goran Marković, for example, who made, while the war was raging around him, a playful retrospective of the seeming good old days under Tito in *Tito and Me* (*Tito i ja* 1992). Once the Dayton Agreement had been signed and so-called peace began, but with Milošević still in power, he made *Belgrade Follies* (*Poludeli ljudi*, 1997), which takes on the carnival of protest, turmoil, excitement and broken dreams that Belgrade became during the war years under Milošević's increasing control of the nation. It is a fiction film but presented like a documentary capturing the strong street protests by the students, including the closing down of the alternative radio station B-52. As Ranko Munitić notes, in the film, "Belgrade thus becomes a set for the screen, a movie theater stage, a cinematic theater for special performances not seen before in Marković's films."¹⁴ As Marković observes, the film is his response to capturing the times rather than an attempt to make a mature "masterpiece" late in his career.¹⁵ Thus once more, we have a filmmaker who offers no simple "answers," but who rather plunges the viewer into the "fray of life" and the sea of changing and conflicting values that had and have become Serbian reality.

In 2001, Marković made a personal documentary about "the times," *Serbia, Year Zero* (*Srbia, godine nulte*), which was co-produced with a French company. It became Marković's observation on the Milošević era and the filmmaker's attack on specific individuals whom he felt became part of the Milošević "team." In 2003, Marković returned to the turbulent street life of the 1990s to make one of the most powerful "post-Yugoslav" films of the post-war years, *The Cordon* (*Kordon*), which won the Grand Prize of the Americas at Montreal. Set during the months of student protests that attempted to overthrow Milošević in 1997, Marković's film focuses on one police "cordon" (patrol). We get to know each policeman in this small group that has been instructed to beat up and disperse protesters. What comes through by the end of the film is the absurdity and even sadness of these men who never speak of politics, but who, for various reasons, follow orders without thinking. The police chief has a daughter who is a protester and his men wind up beating her boyfriend so badly that he loses an eye. The chief himself has a stroke and nearly dies. One of the most affecting scenes is simply an extended moment of one policeman sitting on a park bench with an old woman, each talking about their problems. Clear, simple, and touching as each is living out two or more lives. Once more, what comes through is the humanity of these characters caught up in a society under extreme pressures that are never clearly

confronted. In no way is Marković justifying police brutality under Milošević's regime. Rather, the film opens up the reality that most of the so-called military and police forces were made up of individuals dealing with their own hardships who had neither the courage nor strength to change their own lives.

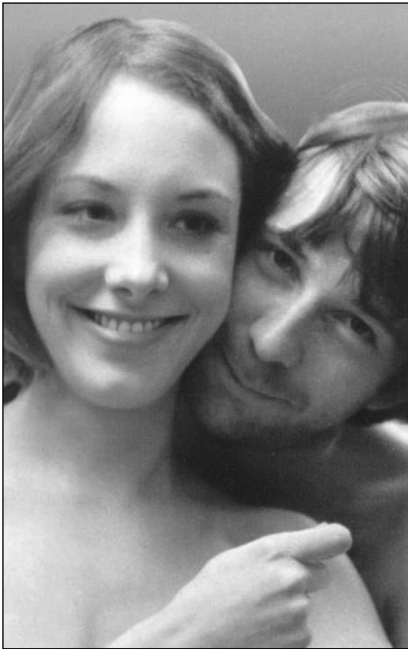
Srdjan Karanović who, since his days studying in Prague, has also been making award-winning films and television series and also teaching not only at the Belgrade University film program, but also for several years during the war at Boston University, continued to make powerful films reflecting the times. In fact he "previewed" the dangers of the times coming before the war with his film titled, yes, *A Film With No Name* (*Za sada bez dobrog naslova*, 1988). With dark irony, Karanović's film follows a Belgrade filmmaker trying to make a documentary about a Serb who has had his penis cut off by the angry relatives of the Albanian Kosovo woman with whom he is in love. In the film's "happy ending" the woman is pregnant, the couple is still in love, and they decide to marry and have the child. In the last scene, they leave Yugoslavia for France, putting "this crazy country" behind them. Thus, this Balkan Romeo and Juliet have a "happy ending" in that they live and love and begin a family, but they do so away from their native Yugoslavia where ethnic and religious tensions have risen to such an extent as to make life for them together impossible.

After the war, Karanović completed a romantic comedy dedicated to Rene Clair in the opening credits. It is concerned with the reality of the hundreds of thousands of refugees living in and around Belgrade after the Dayton Peace Accord. *Loving Glances* (*Sjaj u ocima*, 2003) weaves a tender and bitter tale of Labud, a young Serb from Sarajevo in love with Romana, a young Croatian from Zagreb. Karanović has explained clearly how and why he wanted to make a film that goes beyond the mere horrors and violence that have so characterized the media's coverage of the war, Milošević and the breakup of Yugoslavia. He comments that:

During the terrible and dehumanizing wars of the Former Yugoslavia, it was clear that a number of my colleagues would spend many years making films about atrocities, death, shootings and killings and that probably none of them would ever achieve the impact of documentary television reports. I grew up believing that I should make films that only I could make and write stories that could happen only in my country—I decided to look for a story that did not exist in any television report. I wished to make a film about refugees and their attempts

to lead a normal life in the middle of all the upheaval. I tried to find a diamond in the rough of history. I have, as many others, in my previous films tried to prove that life is absurd, full of suffering as well as great joy. I felt the need to give the audience back their hope and through film prove that “the devil is not as dark as he may appear.” In a nutshell, I wanted to make a film that would show that there is hope despite the tragedies and destruction that may surround us.¹⁶

In this spirit the couple meets through a Lonely Hearts Club organization that brings a carnival of broken-hearted folk together. Part of the pleasure of the film derives from the fact that Labud, the young man, is constantly visited in his imagination by his mother and his old professor. We (and he) see them, but the other characters do not and, as the romance develops, the young woman, Romana, is “visited” by those characters in her mind, especially a biker boyfriend.



Romana (Ivana Bolanča) and Labud (Senad Alihodžić) in *Loving Glances*

Srjan Karanovic's *Loving Glances* photo

For those familiar with Karanović's earlier works, this latest film has the carnivalesque elements seen in *Social Game* (*Društvena igra*, 1972) and *Fragrance of Wild Flowers* (*Miriš poljskog cveca*, 1977) with its bevy of different characters all trying to live out their dreams despite conflicting realities. The ending of *Loving Glances* keeps the romance without the “let’s leave Yugoslavia” conclusion found in *A Film With No Name*. Labud and Romana are together at the end, and she asks where they are going and how they will get there. Labud doesn’t know how to answer either question. But he says, wherever they are going, they can go there together.

If Karanović offered a “healing” narrative bringing disparate parties together through “love,” fellow Prague group colleague

Goran Paskalević offered one of the most scathing views of post-war Serbia in *Powder Keg* (*Bure baruta*, 1998), renamed *Cabaret Balkan* for its American release.¹⁷ *Powder Keg* is a scathing and heart-wrenching post-noir study of Serbs fighting Serbs in Belgrade after the Bosnian War—as a series of interlocking stories and interwoven characters act out “explosive” relationships. The film was the leading box office hit in the former Yugoslavia for 1998 and received festival awards and wide attention abroad on its release.¹⁸ What all audiences appreciate almost immediately is that nothing depicted in the film is lightheartedly comic even though there is much dark laughter. The American title *Cabaret Balkan* emphasizes the theatrical framing of the film which bookends and intersperses the “real life” stories with a sense of performance, reminiscent not only of the traditions outlined above, but, of course, films such as Bob Fosse’s *Cabaret* (1972), set in pre-World War II Berlin as the Nazi party was coming to power. The performance basis of the film is established when Paskaljević’s narrator faces us and speaks directly to us. The narrator ends the film in the same mode. Theater and life finally become, not a “powder keg,” but unconsciousness as Belgrade and the cinema fade to black. The narrator’s volcanic flow of language half way through the film sounds almost like some form of a Balkan rap song, half mad and half playful, anarchistic, absurd, and definitely excessive:

All the politicians/ Europe’s undertakers/ The worms, ideas, chaos/
ghettos of paranoia/ hermetic circles/ esoteric circles/ dickomantics,
schizomantics/ necromantics, metamantics./ Fuck it all/ It’s so boring,
children./ Ethnic tension civil war/ brother killing brother/ If you
have an open wound/ Don’t wait for somebody to help you./ Cauterize it./
Don’t pity anybody./ If you pity anybody/ fuck him till he’s dead./
Because death is beautiful/ and the world is absurd./ Politics is
madness/ and I’m full of shit.”

The lines both amuse and frustrate us, for, like the film itself, Paskaljević’s cabaret narrator becomes an absurd nihilist who sarcastically undermines his own position—we cannot criticize him for he is “full of shit.” The arresting premise at the center of the script is the frighteningly honest perception that the real “powder keg” in the former Yugoslavia does not have to do with Muslim against Orthodox nationalists but, ultimately, Serb against Serb as the “situation” appears to have drained away all aspects of humanity and civility. Paskaljević also leaves us with no doubt that these problems appear almost entirely

male-centered, with women forced to react to and/or accept the excessive and immature behavior of the men around them.¹⁹ The achievement of *Cabaret Balkan* is that, by the end of the film, we have sensed that all the Serbian characters are guilty to one degree or another. And surely the film's explosive despair reflects much of the unresolved hostilities within Serbian culture.

Many younger Serbian filmmakers have in the past dozen years made similar dark yet ironic films about social and political confusion in Belgrade after the war. Srdjan Dragojević, for instance, offers a very dark view of a collapse of values in *Wounds* (*Rane*, 1998). The film takes on the increasing Belgrade reality of organized crime, murder, prostitution, drugs and hatred that has been so prevalent after the war. Announcing that he was born the day that Tito died, Pinki, the main protagonist, then traces his life as a punk mobster, moving inside a world of drugs, sex, guns and murder. Much of the film (like many subsequent films) makes use of Novi Beograd and its cheap high rise apartments as a location for various crime scenes. "My universities were the street and the cemetery," we hear. Like *Pretty Village Pretty Flame*, *Wounds* is about buddies who have become foes and as in his earlier film, *Wounds* is told in flashback as three friends wind up killing each other by the film's end. Strongly acted and well paced, *Wounds* points to a dark vision of the poverty of possibilities for Serbian males and an increasingly one-dimensional role for women in such a violent culture. War has not led to peace in Dragojević's cinematic stories or in the many true stories we read in the press, and, as Dragojević's films painfully show, both men and women suffer because no lasting or workable solutions seem to be developing.

Momčilović's *Seven and a Half*, which we have referenced in our opening, similarly offers seven "takes" on the confusion in Belgrade today each reflecting one of the seven deadly sins with the "half" playfully winking at us, of course, to Federico Fellini's *8 1/2* and Ingmar Bergman's *The Seventh Seal*. In the final episode, "Envy," two unemployed Serbs are sitting at a simple café/restaurant owned by a Bosnian refugee who is taking his pregnant wife to the hospital to deliver their child. But when the Serbs and he get in an argument about who makes the best kebabs, Serbia or Bosnia, they pour sugar in the gas tank of his Mercedes when he is not looking. They make it clear that they are jealous that this "refugee" has done well in post-war life whereas they have no jobs, wives, families or cars. When the Bosnian gets a call that the baby is a boy but he is not breathing well, there is

panic when the car won't start. Finally the Serbs get a taxi and help the desperate Bosnian to the hospital.

Instead of going for a violent ending as in *Wounds* or a "no win" dark comic conclusion as in *Powder Keg*, Momčilović who had previously scripted the very popular wryly comic *When I Grow Up I'll Be a Kangaroo* (*Kad porastem biću kengur*, 2004), goes for a "carnavalesque" coming together of all seven tales in a healing conclusion. At the hospital we meet each character from the previous tales, each at the hospital for a different reason and all join in singing the same lullaby for the Bosnian baby as we see in a close up the child is in a special see through machine to help it breathe and it begins to move and cry. As if we were ending a Hollywood musical or a Fellini comedy all are singing together as a child has been saved and will begin his life in the complicated new Serbia. As one Belgrade viewer of the film comments, the film:

...doesn't tend to moralize—it discovers that there is and should be a moment of catharsis and redemption although the characters make mistakes. Their lives, in Christian terms, aren't sinful, and their weaknesses are caused by the context we live in. Therefore, this story repeatedly calls out for laughter. To conquer the fear and problems, to be self-ironic to laugh at themselves—it's the way of transcending one's pain.²⁰

It is possible to thus say Momčilović's approach like that of several other Serbian filmmakers echoes Nelson Mandela's vision and values even after 27 years in prison that, "We cannot forget, but we must forgive."

Finally, while some filmmakers who gained world attention before the wars, such as Emir Kusturica, have not made films that solidly take on the post war realities since the end of the wars, others such as Želimir Žilnik have continued to reach out and explore the current situation in challenging films.²¹ In a series of orchestrated documentaries of the life of a real Kosovo gypsy (*rom* as they are called in Serbia), named, yes, Kenedi. Žilnik tracks his protagonist returning to Serbia after being raised and living in Germany in *Kenedi Goes Back Home* (*Kenedi se vraća kući*, 2003), then when he finds his relatives and tries to settle into Serbian post war life in *Kenedi, Lost and Found* (*Kenedi*, 2005), and most recently as Kenedi realizes that Serbia is not working out for him and he becomes a male prostitute finally agreeing to marry a wealthy German man and move back to Germany in *Kenedi Is Get-*

ting *Married* (*Kenedi se ženi*, 2007). Once again, Žilnik uses his documentary approach to open the Serbian reality from a perspective—that of someone at the bottom of the social ladder, a gypsy—and show a complex and changing set of values. We come to be sympathetic to how hard a life Kenedi has and his attempt to live without using violence and those means that so many Serbs are involved in during this constantly fluctuating period. Thus, while previous popular Yugoslav films that have treated gypsies almost romantically even though they are shown to have economically difficult lives—Šijan's *Who Is Singing Over There?* (*Ko to tama peva?* 1980) and Kusturica's *Time of the Gypsies* (*Dom za vesanje*, 1988) for instance—Žilnik's close-up on a real gypsy life and environment challenges the viewers to not forget such a parallel world within the Serbian reality.

Hollywood Influences on Serbian Cinema in Recent Films

Our survey of cinema and changing values in Serbia post-war and post-Yugoslavia would not be complete without mentioning a growing number of films that are influenced by Hollywood genres, styles and specifically aiming for a youth audience as entertainment. We are speaking, of course, of a generation that was born and grew up in the past decades not only with wars but with the Internet, cheap cameras including cell phones with video filming capacities, computer editing, music videos and TV influences from around the world. Such films do not necessarily say “we want to avoid harsh realities that the war has left us with,” but it would be fair to say that they are a vote for saying that “we have a right to enjoy our youth too.”

Radivoje Andrić is one such filmmaker whose debut film, *Three Palms for Two Punks and a Babe* (*Tri palme za dve bitange i ribicu*, 1998) is refreshingly offbeat and became very popular at home and at festivals and was followed by an even more popular second feature, *Thunderbirds* (*Munje*, 2001), written by Srba Andelić. This was a playfully exaggerated mix of romantic, musical, and crime film clearly aiming at the teen and young 20's market. It also managed to capture first place at the box office that year. It follows the story of three young male friends—Mare, Pop and Gojko—who are trying to break into the hip music scene of Belgrade and score with some chicks at the same time. Shot on digital video and referencing many Hollywood and British teen films in visual and story style, the film could easily be enjoyed by teens everywhere although ironic references to post war

Serbia come through as well. This is most obvious in the final shot as our buddies accidentally drive a car through a guard rail on top of an elevated parking lot and they hang precariously—shouting “Serbia” as if their dangerous condition represents the whole of their life. Something of a Balkan *Snatch* (2000), Andrić’s film steered away from the depressing nihilism of *Wounds*’ conclusion towards a playful hopefulness despite the ineptitude of the main characters.

Andrić’s *When I Grow Up, I’ll Be A Kangaroo* became an upbeat 2004 celebration of Belgrade’s current post-war, 21st century reality and diverse population of natives and refugees. He focuses on an evening in which a host of characters are watching Euro soccer on TV in a café and admiring a real Yugoslav player named “Kangaroo.” Meanwhile we follow the story of Braća, a young man, intent on romance with the girl of his dreams. A lot of humor derives from a zany date in an almost deserted movie theater as Belgrade goes through an earthquake and, at the end of the film, Belgrade experiences the appearance of flying saucers over the city (a welcome nod to Hollywood Sci-Fi!). A third “layer” to the story involves several male friends who have reduced their lives to drinking beer on the rooftop of their apartment building and urinating over the side whenever moved to do so. Somewhere between *Dumb and Dumber* and *Pulp Fiction*, Andrić’s film echoes familiar Hollywood youth characters without going for any close up on fragmented Serbian or Balkan values.

The fact that comedy continues to rule at the Serbian box office has most recently been proven by Miloš Radović and his 2003 comedy *Small World* (*Mali svet*), which sold 240,000 tickets in 2003–04. In a playful way, the Marx Brothers meet Laurence Sterne’s 18th century British comic novel *Tristram Shandy* as the narrator of *Small World* is a child who has not only been born but who does not yet exist! As critic Goran Gočić notes, “*Small World* ornaments a simple event of theft with a hatful of crazy coincidences—from a suicidal doctor to a policeman struck by lightning.”²²

Switching over to Hollywood crime, film noir, and dramatic genres, a variety of recent Serbian popular films have taken on these influences. We have already mentioned Golubović’s popular film, *The Trap* that involves a father desperate to save his son who is willing to murder to raise the money for an operation in Germany. As Golubović notes, “*The Trap* is a film about post-Milošević’s Serbia, in which there is no more war, but there is moral and existential desert, about Serbia in transition, in which human life still isn’t worth a lot, and about normal life which still seems unreachable.”²³

Furthermore, Srdjan Golubović's *Absolute Hundred* (*Absolutini sto*, 2001) would represent another among a growing number of such Serbian "dark" films.

Finally, consider one more strong drama. We opened our study with a quote from Ivan Živković's debut film *Hadersfield* (2007) based on the popular stage play written by Uglješa Šajtinac that is still running in Belgrade: "Next week we continue our tale of the sunken Slav tribe." Three friends who have not seen each other in years, one of whom has returned from the village of Hadersfield in England, meet up for a dark and violent evening in the late 1990s as they try to resolve who and where they are in their lives in a shattered Serbia. *Variety* critic Alissa Simon notes that in this powerful *Big Chill*-like ensemble: "Action unfolds in an unspecified Serbian backwater, an ultra-macho world where men are crude and quick-tempered, and women are either sex objects, crazy castrating bitches or absent heartbreakers. Repeated references to "Hamlet" drive home the point that something's rotten, problems exist between generations, and madness might strike at any moment."²⁴

And yet while Hollywood influenced films have sold many tickets, we should note that in a swiftly changing world that post-Yugoslav Serbia represents, the biggest selling film of the decade with more than a million tickets sold in 2002 alone, *Zone*, speaks to a nostalgia for the good old days of 19th century Serbia on the rise as a nation. What did this costume epic mixing drama and comedy and set in the 19th century before the end of the Turkish occupation offer such eager audiences in Serbia and Montenegro (and in sales to many other countries)? Made by 75-year-old Zdravko Šotra and based on a popular novel by Stevan Sremac, this Balkan Romeo and Juliet story is set in a village south of Niš. However, instead of a Shakespearean tragedy ending with bodies of loved ones, Šotra provides us with several hours of nostalgia for a simpler way of life with lots of lively traditional music, food, festivity, and a final happy ending as the couple marry despite social and political differences. Clearly this is nostalgia for a lost Yugoslavia working full force. And as Serbs must face a troubled present and uncertain future perhaps as one Bulgarian viewer has commented, "This is a lovely portrait of the patriarchal Balkan society of Ottoman times! It is a beautiful myth of the festivity of bygone times, a myth that every person on earth needs!"²⁵

Towards a Conclusion and New Beginnings

I conclude my survey as Serbia enters an even more complex time as Kosovo, hitherto a province of Serbia, became an independent republic in February 2008. There are numerous positive and hopeful signs if we look at the complete cinematic and media horizon in Serbia. There are, for instance, at least fourteen annual film festivals in the two republics including the well respected FEST (Belgrade International Film Festival) held each winter (www.fest.org.yu) and festivals of animation in Čačak, screenwriting in Vrnjačka Banja, acting in Niš, and, even underwater films in Belgrade. Furthermore, as recently as 2006, four Serbian films were in the top ten box office films of the year (*Ivko's Fete*, *We Are No Angels*, *Border Post* and *Seven and a Half*) a fact rarely duplicated by any country outside the United States, and thus Serbian filmmakers can be proud they are continuing to connect with their own people.²⁶ Furthermore, the reorganized Film Center Serbia (*Filmski centar Srbije* www.fcs.co.yu) under acting director Miroljub Vucković has taken on at least four overall missions: 1) promotion of Serbian film throughout the world as seen by the screening of films in over 28 festivals; 2) the support and financing of documentary films that concern Serbia in many ways; 3) encouraging young and new filmmakers particularly through script development programs, and 4) developing books and publications related to Serbian filmmakers and subjects on Serbian cinema.²⁷

Yes, Serbs all do live two lives, but so do we all, for who we each claim to be is always a crossroads of a variety of values, personal, social, political and religious. The question is rather, is the society one lives in free enough to allow a variety of choices and the freedom to choose one's values without suffering for them. In this spirit I feel the panorama of cinematic approaches mentioned here is a positive sign for a country and a culture with a troubled past that is not resolved to move forward. As the ending of *Seven and a Half* celebrates, it may well be possible in the emerging Serbia to transcend the "seven deadly sins" and sing a lullaby together no matter what values we follow, and to celebrate the new born child who must grow up in a changing Serbia.

I hope my brief study is in the same spirit which Dina Iordanova expresses in the opening of *Cinema of Flames: Balkan Film, Culture and the Media* when she suggests that we must go beyond the stereotypes of what is suggested by "Balkan" in any narrow sense and be of

interest, "...to all those concerned with the critical exploration of the cross-cultural dynamics that characterizes our times."²⁸

When I Grow Up I'll be a Kangaroo is surely emblematic of the current phase in Serbian cinema. The film's sense of resignation to the fact that people "make mistakes" and that we have to move on, together with its refusal to draw moral lessons, reflects the lack of consensus among Serbs about the recent past, even a certain degree of uncertainty. As Sabrina Ramet has made clear in her introduction, civic values are invaluable for the building of a stable, liberal democratic system and yet so many "uncivic" values have surfaced with the wars, and various conflicts touching on religion, nationalism, politics and more. Serbian films, in spite of their relative honesty about the recent past, are just beginning to address the bigger challenge of the choice between civic and uncivic values.

Serbian filmmakers have basically not feared imprisonment or censorship in making films such as *Pretty Village Pretty Flames*, *Border Post*, *When I Grow Up I'll Be a Kangaroo* and *Kenedi is Getting Married* which speaks well for one level of freedom in Serbia. And yet the irony is that most of these films depict openly, honestly and imaginatively, individuals forced to live "uncivic" lives if they wish to survive. In such a *Cabaret Balkan*, functioning democracy is not seen as evolving anywhere in the territory covered on film.

And yet, once more, I wish to point to the ending of a film such as *Seven and a Half* as everyone from each "story" sings the same lullaby as a clearly "civic" direction that the filmmaker is suggesting that could lead to further possible "sharing" activities. No, this is not the ending of Frank Capra's *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington* (1939) with all personal, social and political issues finding a "happy ending." But it is not the ending of the Oscar winning Bosnian film, Danis Tanovic's *No Man's Land* (2001) as two of the main characters—one Serb and one Bosnian soldier have killed each other—and the third character, a Bosnian, has no chance of survival as he lays on a land mine.

A functioning civic and democratic Serbian society in the future? Serbian cinema before and since Milošević suggests it will be a long and hard road with no arrival time predicted. But the mere existence of such open films, comic and dramatic, fictional and documentary, is a positive sign for hope.

Acknowledgements

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Notes

- ¹ Roger Ebert, "The Green Berets" *The Sun Times*, (June 26 1968) at www.rogerebert.com. Ebert goes on to say, "At this moment in our history, locked in the longest and one of the most controversial wars we have ever fought, what we certainly do not need is a movie depicting Vietnam in terms of cowboys and Indians. That is cruel and dishonest and unworthy of the thousands who have died there."
- ² *Filmski centar Srbije* (www.fcs.rs).
- ³ Daniel J. Goulding, *Liberated Cinema: The Yugoslav Experience*, 2nd ed. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2003), p. 186.
- ⁴ Andrew Horton, "Cinema Haunts My Memory: Filmmaking in the Former Yugoslavia," a chapter in *Cinema in Transition: Post Socialist Film-making in East-Central Europe*, edited by Catherine Portuges and Peter Hames (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2008).
- ⁵ Goran Gocić, "Serbia and Montenegro," *TCM International Film Guide 2008*, edited by Ian Haydn Smith (London: Wallflower Press, 2008), p. 262.
- ⁶ With the current war in Iraq, some concerned Hollywood sponsored filmmakers have taken on making films that concern the Middle East and the on-going conflicts including Alejandro González Iñárritu's *Babel* (2006) with Brad Pitt and George Gaghan's *Syriana* (2005) with George Clooney.
- ⁷ Andrew Horton, "From *Cabaret Balkan* to *Beautiful People*: Laughter. Dark & Joyous in Recent Balkan Films," *Film Quarterly*, Vol. 56, No. 1 (Fall 2002): 20–24.
- ⁸ Žilnik has said *Tito For the Second Time Among the Serbs* was shot in two days with a digital camera and one actor for about 1,000 euros! The video version of it and many other of his films he has said showed up all over Europe as well as Croatia and elsewhere. Miroljub Vucković (ed.), *Želimir Žilnik: Above the Red Dust* (Belgrade: Institut za Film, 2003), p. 131.
- ⁹ Dusko Doder and Louise Branson, *Milošević: Portrait of a Tyrant* (New York: Free Press, 1999), p. 9.
- ¹⁰ Allen Young, "Vukovar," *Variety* (24 October 1994) from. www.variety.com.
- ¹¹ Ray Pride, "Pretty Village Pretty Flames," at <http://www.filmvault.com/filmvault/chicago/p/prettyvillagepret1.html> [accessed on 29 May 2010].
- ¹² Rajko Grlić, "Director's statement" on www.borderpostmovie.com.
- ¹³ Sabrina Petra Ramet, "Introduction: The Roots of Discord and the Language of War," in Sabrina P. Ramet and Ljubiša S. Adamovich (eds.), *Beyond Yugoslavia: Politics, Economics, and Culture in a Shattered Community* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1995), p. 7.
- ¹⁴ Ranko Munitić, *Goran Marković* (Belgrade: Institut za Film, 2003), p. 95.
- ¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 96.

- ¹⁶ Srdjan Karanović, "Director's Statement" on www.fame.uk.com/Films-Completed/Loving-Glances.
- ¹⁷ Goran Paskaljević was a very active member of the "Prague" group after his return from Czechoslovakia in the 1970s, turning out a series of hits that mixed humor and insight into social situations in films such as *The Dog Who Loved Trains* (*Pas koji je voleo vozove*, 1977), *Special Treatment* (*Poseban tretman*, 1980) and *Guardian Angel* (*Anđeo Čuvar*, 1987).
- ¹⁸ Andrew Horton, "Why Do You Laugh At Me?: *Cabaret Balkan*," in *Cineaste*, Vol. XXV, No. 1 (Winter 1999), p. 45.
- ¹⁹ This diminished sense of Balkan women at the end of the century has been well described recently by Sabrina Ramet in her book, Sabrina Ramet (ed.), *Gender Politics in the Western Balkans: Women and Society in Yugoslavia and the Yugoslav Successor States* (University Park: Penn State Press, 1999) in which she writes, "In the age of politicized nationalism, the self-proclaimed defenders of the 'Nation' reinterpret the community in folk-mythological terms, reducing women to 'womenfolk' who need men's protection and construing feminists who dare to challenge the patriarchal agenda of the nationalists as witches" (p. 6).
- ²⁰ A Belgrade viewer commenting under "User Comments" for *Seven and a Half* at www.imdb.com.
- ²¹ Kusturica's most recent film, for instance, *Promise Me This* (*Zavet*, 2007) did so poorly in reviews and box office receipts even in Serbia that he pulled it from distribution. Bernard Besserglik in his *Hollywood Reporter* Cannes review (12 June 2007) wrote, "The Bosnian-born director runs through his usual box of magic tricks in this In Competition feature, but inspiration is missing and the movie will trade, if it trades at all, on Kusturica's name. Its prospects outside Europe and the festival circuit are slim indeed." www.hollywoodreporter.com.
- ²² Goran Gočić, "Serbia and Montenegro," in *Variety International Film Guide 2005* (Los Angeles: Silman-James Press, 2005), pp. 256–258 at p. 256.
- ²³ Srdjan Golubović, "Plot Summary" for *KLOPKA* (2007) on www.imdb.com.
- ²⁴ Alissa Simon, "*Hadersfield*," (26 August 2007) on www.variety.com.
- ²⁵ Gospodin Bezkrain from Bulgaria on "Viewers' Comments: *Zone*" at www.imdb.com.
- ²⁶ Goran Gočić, "Serbia and Montenegro," in James Hogg (ed.), *TCM International Film Guide 2008* (London: TCM Publishers, 2008).
- ²⁷ Personal interview with Miroljub Vucković during January 2008 in the FCS office.
- ²⁸ Dina Iordanova, *Cinema of Flames: Balkan Film, Culture and the Media* (London: British Film Institute, 2001) p. 21.

Part Four – Schools, Gender, and Nationalism

Value Changes in the Interpretations of History in Serbia

Dubravka Stojanović

“Serbs, gentlemen, just without history and similar crap.” This is how Richard Holbrooke, international negotiator and emissary of President Bill Clinton, started one of the many rounds of negotiations during the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina. By doing so, Holbrooke demonstrated that, through contacts with local political leaders, he understood the great importance of using historical arguments in the existing political culture. He was right. Wars in the former Yugoslavia during the 1990s were processed by advertising, rationalised by ideology, and psychologically justified because para-historical explanations put the bloody resolution of the Yugoslav drama in the necessary historical context¹. These “games with history” were needed in order to reinterpret lowly war aims as “high intentions” derived from the “historical national grievances,” primarily for setting right “historical injustices.” That is why the war in Croatia was, through constant stirring up of memories of the genocide against the Serbs during the Second World War, presented as a sort of “genocide prevention.” Beginning in the late 1980s, Belgrade historians with close ties to the government, appeared on television, evening after evening, to speak about real or invented details of the Ustaša genocide against the Serbs during the Second World War, which was supposed to serve as an *a priori* indulgence for the planned, and later realized, ethnic engineering on the territory of the Republic of Croatia. The war in Bosnia was put in the ideological context of the “eternal conflict” between Christianity and Islam, with its historical frame positioned in the late Middle Ages, by using of the term “Turks” for the Bosniak population. That is how a bloody war, with ethnic cleansing and genocide in Srebrenica, received historical justification and almost defensive characteristics.

Through many similar actions of historians, history as a discipline needed to change its nature in its entirety: instead of describing and

analyzing past reality, it became a kind of experimental science. Like physics or chemistry, it was assigned the task of producing a new reality, based on new junctures of previously known or unknown elements. The recomposed and reworked past had the task of producing a new future. If one wanted to be cynical, one could even say that this was a “creative turn” of Hobsbawm’s or Gellner’s theses about the invention of a tradition: it was no longer the case that every present created the tradition and historical memory it needed, but brutal, surgical cuts in the previous memory model were used in order to change the present. In other words, since the present could not have been changed easily or quickly, and Yugoslavia could not have been dissolved and recomposed in ethnically cleansed national states, it was much easier to first change the model of the national remembering, and then, based on the changed pattern, to intervene in the present. Thus, through para-historiography, written and electronic media, a conflict concept of history was created first, and then the conflict became reality that appeared quite naturally, as the logical continuation of the centuries-old conflict between the Serbs and all the other peoples.

In order for that to become possible, it was necessary to change the previous, socialist value system, and to transform it into an equally authoritarian, but opposite system, derived from the prevailing nationalist ideology, dominant from the late 1980s. In the total value system, it was necessary to emphasize national feelings in the first place, and to create a concrete concept of national sentiments and identifications through a specific structuring of the relations me-us and we-others.² In order to achieve this, it was necessary to create a mythical image of one’s own nation, which was done in the most “authentic” way through the recomposition of historical facts, which were turned into crucial evidence of this new, mythical narrative, about ourselves and others.³ The media served to disseminate this new model of historical consciousness, together with the public debates (primarily of the Serbian Writers’ Union⁴), and history textbooks.

Under the Milošević government, textbooks with altered value concepts were published for the 1993/1994 school year, in the middle of the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina.⁵ The sense of these textbooks was precisely correlated with the previously described need to change both present and future, through the misuse of history. The essence of the new, desired model of national consciousness was developed in these textbooks, so that they could be used as the supreme historical source for the analysis of the dominant Serb ideology of the 1990s. It is not

important to measure the real effects of education, and textbooks in particular, on the formation of the national consciousness, or to pose the question as to how much that segment influenced total knowledge of the past, in competition with all the other sources of information. Yet, it is important for this analysis that textbooks in general, and history textbooks in particular, have always been an important tool of the authorities in Serbia. That is why it is important to say that even today, in Serbia (as in very few other places in Europe), history textbooks are still under the publishing monopoly of the Council for Textbooks Publishing, an institution that has “special relations” with the Ministry of Education, and which is headed by the most reliable members of the ruling parties. While for most other subjects, it is possible to publish textbooks with private publishers, this is not allowed in the cases of history and geography—which points to the conclusion that these are not just school subjects, but also subjects through which an identity matrix aligned with the government needs is being transmitted.

Along with public discourses on history, this chapter will present an analysis of both present, and Milošević-era history textbooks. Even though this project deals with post-Milošević transition, there are several reasons for the analysis of the value system introduced in Serbia during the 1990s. First, as these were transmitted through education, they have a delayed, “long term” effect in the minds of the students or former students, independent of whether there was a change of government, or the introduction of a new value system. Second, these textbooks were in use from the 2002/2003 school year, when new ones were written, so they also form part of the transition confusion in Serbia since 2000. Third, the same value system is maintained in the textbooks published following the political changes in 2000; so it is necessary to provide at least rudimentary elements of the value system of the Milošević interpretation of the past, in order to better understand the question of continuity and discontinuity between Serbia at the time, and present-day Serbia. Finally, the fact already mentioned, that publishing history textbooks is still controlled by the ruling party, proves that the political authorities, rather than the educational establishment, still have a “special mission,” which also places them in continuity with Milošević’s time, where school had a special role in the “patriotic education” of the students.

Continuity of the Value System

As stated before, the key shift in the value system in Serbia, which occurred with Slobodan Milošević's rise to power, was never fundamentally questioned. The dominant discourse of post-Milošević Serbia retained the nationalist mythical frame of the narrative of a Serbian nation, introduced in the late 1980s. That is one of the key reasons why history teaching resembles preparation for the military service, more than a discipline of critical thinking; and why the struggle for the dominant paradigm of historical thinking is actually a war for the total annihilation of the enemy.⁶ History is still perceived as a provider of arguments necessary to create an appropriate identity, and connects with Ernest Renan's definition of 1882, when he stated that misunderstanding of one's own history is the basis of the national being.⁷ The shifting of ideological and identity matrixes during the Milošević era had the aim of placing Serbian history within a nationalist mythic framework, necessary to justify the wars in the former Yugoslavia in the early 1990s. It was necessary to reconstruct a new national and historical consciousness which was a blend of delusion of grandeur, and self-pity, of national arrogance and self-victimization. All of this was explained as a process of "return to oneself," following the Communist period that, according to this interpretation, had as its principal goal the erasure of national consciousness and memory. That is why the teaching of history became extremely important. It was understood as one of the principal tools in "liberating the suppressed," rediscovering "the truth about ourselves," as well as about "others." This necessitated a series of changes of facts, deleting many of them, reducing the importance of some, and additionally stressing yet other ones. Hence, this was not just a shift in interpretation, but also a change of facts, necessary in order to establish a mythical narrative. This mythical narrative had several key components. "The people," or, more precisely, "the Serbian people," were declared to be the main protagonist of history.⁸

This was an essential shift with regard to the previous time, when history was understood as class struggle. "The people" were essentialized as a "unique being," almost like a biological community, an organism with clearly defined common traits that deny any individuality, particularity, or pluralism.⁹ This essentialist concept of the nation was maintained in post-Milošević Serbia. The collective, that is to say, the Serbian people, remained the main pillar of history. This was most important for maintaining continuity with the value system introduced

during the Milošević era.¹⁰ Essentially, we have a collectivist way of thinking, where individualist values of modern society have been understood as “tearing of the national being,” as endangering of the whole, and therefore condemned as inimical.¹¹ This is the basis of the anti-plural conception of society, for each “alterity” is perceived as a danger, against which, as stated by a representative in the Serbian National Assembly in the early 20th century, one can use all the means necessary.¹² This value system is essentially authoritarian, and contrary to any idea of the competition between different ideas. It denies historical richness, reducing it to a single dimension. That is why groups that had different views from the majority in certain historical moments, are never mentioned in this interpretation, for, in the past as well as in the present, a possibility that things were, or that they could have been different, is a priori denied. Neither public discourse, nor history textbooks mention the heated debates that went on in the pages of the free press, or in the National Assembly in the last decade of the nineteenth century about some decisions that needed to be made at crucial times, thus creating an inaccurate perception that the “nation” was homogeneous in the past, and identical to its essentialist self.

One could illustrate this concept with the debate created in the Serbian public by the additional teaching materials that were published in 2005 by the Center for Democracy and Reconciliation in South East Europe from Thessaloniki, and edited by Christina Kouluri.¹³ These are four volumes of historical sources from 11 Southeast European countries where the most controversial and most sensitive events from the common Balkan past were presented, using comparative methods and multi-perspectivity. These books, which promote civic values, caused tumultuous reactions, especially in Serbia and in Greece, as well as serious consequences for some of the project participants. The basis of these attacks was the fact that history was presented from different perspectives, from the points of view of various participants in the events. This forced participants in the debate to assess the project as a part of the globalization process, or, as put forth in the attacks in the Greek press, “the weakening of the importance of the nation,”¹⁴ which “threatens our national identity,” and as a way “towards cultural homogenization,” so that these books were declared to constitute a “genocide on memory,” or “crime of peace...”¹⁵

Particularly interesting was the reaction of the director of the Council for Textbook Publishing, historian Radoš Ljušić, who condemned the books, stating that there cannot be many truths, that “in history, there

is only one truth, just as there is only one God.”¹⁶ He thus expressed the essence of the authoritarian and anti-plural pattern of thinking, which denies divisions within society, but also takes away the right of “others” to see the events differently from “us.” That is why such a monolithic understanding of nation as a being, and “others” as enemy beings, is not just dangerous for the democratic development of a society, but also dangerous for interethnic relations, as it is opposed to the very idea of equality. The concept of one’s own self-righteousness is only a small step away from the idea of one’s own superiority, which fuels aggressiveness, and always keeps open the possibility of conflict.

This concept of the past is essentially a mystical one. As the nation is represented as an organic unity, it is understood that there is just one way out in any historical situation, for other solutions have not been shown. Hence, that way out can not be determined as a consequence of anyone’s decision, but rather the nation came to it through destiny or through a metaphysical movement. Such an impression is strengthened by using indeterminate verbal forms and formulations in public discourse, such as “then came the war,” “the sanctions happened to us,” “we suffered the bombing,” and the like, creating an impression that no one bears any responsibility for these events, that no one should be blamed for them, that it all boils down to a mystical flow of history, in which individuals or groups cannot have any influence. This is further amplified in the media, through the use of various metaphorical constructs, the most famous one being that the Serbs “built a house in the middle of the road,” which was supposed to mean that, through a simple twist of fate, this people found itself in the wrong geographical location, and as a consequence it had a number of enemies throughout its existence, wishing to take control of that location.¹⁷ This further abolishes any idea of responsibility, for geography appears as a factor denying any possibility or need for judgments. Geography and history interpreted in such a mystical key, determine “our” existence, adding substantial irrationality to the value system, additionally abolishing any possibility to individualize a society, or for society to take precedence over a community.

Furthermore, such an understanding of history as destiny, necessarily leads to understanding it as a narrowly determined flow that leads somewhere and that is, as demonstrated by Karl Popper, the foundation of every authoritarian and undemocratic society.¹⁸ This further strengthens the perception of history as a closed road with its own mystical aim, which is the basis of every totalitarian utopia. The concept of the

cyclical movement of time, developed without any reservations in history textbooks, also relies on this. Thus, in an eighth grade textbook from the Milošević period, the beginning of the war in 1991 is described as: “The situation was almost identical to that of 1941.”¹⁹ In those years, such a sentence had a strong propaganda value in Serbia, for it meant that history periodically repeats itself in more or less regular time intervals and that this periodicity has nothing to do with the decisions of the political leadership. Facts have no importance for such a mythical interpretation of time, including ones that state that nothing was the same in 1941 and in 1991—from the European and world contexts, to reasons for the dissolution of the two Yugoslavias. Despite these historical facts, a model of thinking according to which history moves based on its own will is forced, additionally, separating society from modern civic values, based on the concept of individual responsibility.

This non-civic value system gains additional strength thanks to the “characteristics” historically ascribed to the Serb nation. I have written about this in detail previously;²⁰ so here I will just outline the basic characteristics of the model of “national character traits,” necessary for understanding the issue of continuity and discontinuity between Milošević-era and post-Milošević Serbia. In the first place, there is an ethnocentric approach to history. This approach is also present in textbooks of the majority of European countries, but has some specificities in the Serbian case. The textbooks support a very influential narrative in the Serbian public, stating that both world wars began and ended in Serbian territory.²¹ This is a sub-type of stereotypes about the Balkans as a powder keg, but with a positive connotation. This narrative was very influential during the 1990s, as from that time the idea that the Yugoslav war would become a trigger for a wider conflict was maintained, additionally adding to the impression that there was a general flow of world history at work. These expectations, and even hopes, could also be heard during the 1999 NATO campaign, especially after the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade was hit—following which, some people openly hoped for a new global conflict. Even the latest events, with Kosovo’s independence, have engendered hope in some quarters that Serbia will again be at the center of a conflict between great powers, as Russia’s opposition in the UN Security Council is taken to mean a new cold war, and the re-establishment of a bipolar world. This perception of Serbia’s place in the past and present is quite removed from reality, but facilitates the retention of a pre-modern value system, con-

stantly reinforcing the image of “oneself” as the chosen people, with a special mission and central position. In the last 20 years, on many occasions, such an understanding of reality induced the Serb political leadership to take risky decisions, which additionally pushed the country to the lowest point in its history.

The image of the “chosen people” is especially reinforced through a dichotomous perception of the nation which is at the same time both historically justified, and a victim of neighboring nations and big powers.²² A strong mythical message that “we never started the wars of conquest” is being built in the public and in the educational system, as situations from the past where Serbia had the opportunity and actually led wars of conquest against her neighbors are omitted from the narratives about the past. Historical facts had to be changed in order to build an image of “the people” that was “historically correct,” that never led wars of conquest, and never reached for something that belonged to others. In order to achieve this, situations contrary to this message were thrown out of history curricula, or their importance was blatantly reduced. For example, in history textbooks, there is very little left about the Serbian government’s policies towards Kosovo and Macedonia in the nineteenth century, there is no explanation of the attack on Bulgaria in 1885, nor of the several attempts to annex Northern Albania during the Balkan wars. Serb national politics are presented only in a defensive tone, which is the necessary mythical framework to create a new identity, the framework that was also used in the ongoing wars. The character of the main hero, “the Serbian people,” created in this fashion, was necessary in order to present the wars of 1990s as purely defensive efforts, which also led to the acquisition of a moral capital, as a kind of guarantee that the Serbian people were, as in previous historical circumstances, “on the right side of the history.”²³ According to this narrative, “the people” clearly recognized this righteous position in any new situation.

The mythical constructs (*mythemes*) thus formed are additionally reinforced by an interpretation that Serbia’s neighbors have been on the wrong side in the two world wars, and it was “us” (the Serbs), due to our own right position, who later enabled them to receive absolution, and brought them to the side of the winners, thanks to the creation of the Yugoslav states. The present textbooks include the following statement: “Toward the end of the First World War, Serbia joined the group of victors in the conflict. Among other things, through this, she enabled other Yugoslav peoples to leave the side of the defeated ones and join

the victors, through the formation of the Yugoslav state.”²⁴ This substantial distinction between “us” and “them” at the same time meant building an arrogant component of national identity, proved by the factographic manipulations showing that “we” have always been on the victorious side of history. By not mentioning “our” own defeats, or engaging in “creative interpretations,” the creators of the new textbooks engineered a victorious mentality and spirit, particularly important at a time of conflict. Essentially, it all comes down to the idea of one’s own superiority, and, therefore, one’s opponents’ inferiority, which was the key ingredient in the creation of a psychological rationale for the war.

Another important topic is the nation as victim.²⁵ It starts from the premise that, despite its own historical righteousness, “the people” were the historical victim of all the neighbors, and even some more distant peoples. This creates a sense of special challenge and martyrdom, most frequently displayed through the use of the term “Golgotha” in describing different historical events. Biblical metaphors are supposed to strengthen the components of historical and national self-awareness that shape an image of the people-victim, distinct from all the others, and therefore also the chosen people, for, despite all the suffering, it remained “just.” Crimes of other peoples against Serbs have been described in the most graphic terms from the early grade textbooks, helping to create an image of the people, the “victim of genocide,” which received through this a sort of preventive historical indulgence. This was especially important during the wars of the 1990s, for it strengthened an image of the people that had to be forgiven for anything, after suffering so much throughout its history.

This can be seen through the titles of chapters in a textbook for nine-year olds on the subject “Nature and Society” from the years of Milošević’s rule. At this age, children acquire their first knowledge about the past, and they are offered the following information as part of the curriculum: “Our Ancestors,” “The Turkish Invasion,” “Enslaved by the Turks,” “the First World War,” “The Liberation of Serbia,” “the Second World War,” “Serbia under Occupiers and their Collaborators,” “The Liberation of Serbia,” and “Renowned Freedom Fighters.”²⁶ It is obvious from this list of chapter titles that the past is represented as a series of wars and suffering, and these first lessons that children receive do not include anything except suffering. This can also be seen through the selection of illustrations in the book, which confront children, without any preparation, with horrors from the national past. They

include: Monuments to the People Killed in Different Wars, The Kosovo Battle of 1389, The Monument to the Kosovo Heroes in Kruševac, People Fleeing the Turks, Leaders of the Serbian Uprisings, Famous Serb Military Leaders from the First World War, Retreat Across Albania, Belgrade in Ruins Following the 1941 Bomb Raid, and Monuments to the People Killed in the Second World War.²⁷ One could add to this a linguistic analysis of the cruel expressions used to describe crimes against Serbs, which helps instill fear in the minds of teenagers—creating future anxiety and aggressiveness. For example, a textbook for the 14-year olds, from which almost ten generations of students learned has the following: “The inmates in the Jasenovac [concentration camp] were slaughtered with knives, killed with different tools, axes, hammers, sledge hammers and iron bars, shot and burnt in the crematorium, cooked alive in cauldrons, hanged, tortured with hunger, thirst and cold, for they lived in camps without food or water.”²⁸

The emphasis on such images from the past fostered a particular relation toward death, which formed an important part of the national myth. A “martyr’s death” of an individual, or of a member of the collective, became a pattern of behavior wished for, and recommended. The message was sent in various ways. When it comes to individuals, there was the glorification of the death of those who had heroically sacrificed themselves for freedom. This led Serbian historians to refer for the first time to Gavrilo Princip, the assassin who killed Archduke Franz Ferdinand and his wife in Sarajevo in 1914, as a Serbian hero.²⁹ With the already known celebration of the death of Stevana Sindelić in the early nineteenth century, who blew himself up with the whole regiment, to avoid being captured by the Ottoman Turkish army, a new hero emerged during the 1990s. This was Major Gavrilović, who, according to the myth, declared to his unit during the 1915 defense of Belgrade, that their regiment had been erased from the list of the living by the Supreme Command, and that, therefore, they should not think about their lives: “Soldiers, heroes! The Supreme Command has deleted our battalion from the roll. Therefore, forward, to glory!”—and this was celebrated in the latest history textbook. The only thing missing was the fact that Major Gavrilović died of old age, some thirty years following this event. Through such examples, the principle of sacrificing oneself for the nation is declared to be the highest value, which is an important motivational factor, particularly during times of conflict.

Another way of constructing the cult of death through history textbooks was referring to a person “despising death,” which is a call to a

heroic way of behaving, where dying for one's own nation was represented as the essence of life. During the era of Milošević, this idea was already promoted in the third grade (9 year olds), through the use of quotes from undeniable national authorities, such as Vuk Karadžić. By quoting Karadžić and his archaic language, the creators of this new matrix were able to add a sense of authenticity, adding strength to their argumentation. Through celebrating *hajduks* (outlaws) and their fight against the Ottoman authorities, the textbook suggested a just pattern for dealing with death: "When they catch someone, take him away, and impale him on a stake, he sings from the top of his lungs, showing that he does not care for living."³⁰ The relationship toward death remains unchanged in the latest generation of textbooks, published after 2001. The conditions during the First World War were described in especially pathetic terms, again with enormous praise for death and self-sacrifice:

In many parts of Serbia, everyday life turned into an epochal resistance to occupiers. Many people condemned to death, as noted by the occupation authorities, behaved "like heroes, and this was not mere posturing, but a sign of determination, spiritual anger, and contempt for the enemy..." There is report from Valjevo that the death sentence "was accepted with calm by both men and women." Thus, the enemy in Serbia had to confront a tremendous political morality of the subjugated population, unprecedented in modern European history. The death sentence lost any efficacy. No one was afraid to die.³¹

The new textbooks thus demonstrated a deep ideological connection with those from the time of Milošević, primarily based upon the mythical relation to the past, and the celebration of collectivist, nationalist, and pre-modern values. Through education, the society remained caught within the authoritarian and patriarchal identity matrix, which denies the individual, and presents history as the destiny and metaphysical evil that does not leave room for choice. The duty of an individual remains clearly defined as subjugation to the collective and his "historical destiny," which cyclically repeats itself. This excludes any possibility for multi-perspectivity, or presenting history as a field of choice and competition between different points of view. A monolithic image of "the people" is cultivated, erasing any concept of personal responsibility, because individuals are immersed in the collective, and completely subservient to it. This influences an irrational attitude toward the past, as well as towards the present, and the moment of confronting the past is postponed again.

Discontinuity of Political Values

After 2000, the new authorities tried to provide an identity for themselves in various forms, and, despite many continuities that tied them to the previous government, to show the depth of the rift between them and their predecessors.³² Anti-communism was used as the key ideological tool, as the new authorities appeared to think that it would provide them with the most sympathy and support from the voters, who were deeply divided. Slobodan Milošević was judged and condemned only as a communist, while the nationalist essence of his ideology was never mentioned. The strategy had a twofold effect: the condemnation of Milošević as a communist was supposed to bestow on the new authorities an aura of liberators, who had defeated communism in Serbia after nearly 60 years. On the other hand, it was also supposed to demonstrate that the new authorities were the agents of authentic national values, and that Milošević did not realize his program because, as a communist, he could not really be a genuine representative of Serb patriotism. As the majority discourse remained nationalistic even after 2000, the new government had to acquire an element of identity that could separate it more firmly from their predecessors, so anti-communism provided an ideal tool for this.

This essence immediately influenced interpretations of history. It was necessary to create one's own historical continuity in order to acquire an invented tradition for oneself. This invented tradition had to rely on pre-communist times, and to find political forces that were opposed to the communists. The Second World War turned out to be the ideal space for the reinterpretation of the past. There were several reasons for this. It was necessary to compromise the Yugoslav communists' victory in the war, as it was the source of their later political authority. It was also necessary to compromise the success of Tito's Yugoslav policies, as the new Serb authorities based their concept of state on anti-Yugoslavism, just as Milošević did. Finally, most of all, it was necessary to change the image of the Chetniks of Draža Mihailović, in order to make that side in the civil war an appropriate "pre-communist" ancestor of the new government. Chetnik anti-communism, nationalism, and traditionalism seemed to be the ideal characteristics of the newly found ancestor; so the work on changing the facts about the Second World War began shortly after the new authorities came into power.³³

They began from what is most obvious and most affects the lives of ordinary citizens: changes of street names and the removal of monuments to people previously celebrated as heroes of the Second World War. There are no precise data on the number of monuments that were removed, but the fact that 800 Belgrade street names have been changed since 2000 can serve as an illustration of the extent of changes to “places of remembrance.” The tendencies also became clear due to the actions of the representatives of the new government on the occasions of various dates that relate to the Second World War. During the very first anniversary of the liberation of Belgrade, on 20 October 2000, a newly elected mayor of the city, historian Milan Protić, said that he did not consider that event to be the one of liberation, but one of occupation. He said that this event would not be celebrated as it had been in the past. The next president of the City Council still regularly attended ceremonies on that day, but the third elected mayor, also a member of the Democratic Party, declared after taking office that October 20 is a controversial event, that there are different opinions about it, and that he would not celebrate it. He delegated the laying of memorial wreaths to his deputies: so it seemed that it was their own private affair, much more than an official commemoration.

The year 2005 was especially important for this issue, as the whole world marked the sixtieth anniversary of the end of the Second World War. The only European country that did not have its representative at the commemoration of the liberation of Auschwitz was Serbia; and her highest representatives gave comical statements about why they failed to attend. Serbia sent a very low-rank delegation to the celebration of the sixtieth anniversary of the end of the Second World War to Moscow. This was also a clear signal that Serbia has problems with interpretations of the Second World War, which is especially clear from the behavior of key politicians. On 9 May 2005, then-Prime Minister Vojislav Koštunica laid flowers at the monument to the airmen who had defended Belgrade during the 1941 bombing, avoiding any acknowledgment of the victors in World War II. The President of Serbia, Boris Tadić, laid flowers to the monument to the Unknown Hero, erected after the First World War, also leaving himself outside the important European and world debate about fascism and anti-fascism. At the same time, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Vuk Drašković, went a few days later, on 13 May 2005, to Ravna gora, where he celebrated the beginning of the Chetnik uprising. He had maintained that ritual since the early 1990s, but in 2005, the commemoration was for the first time organized with

financial assistance from the state. This was quite logical, following the passage of a law, adopted by a large majority in the National Assembly in December 2004, equating the Chetnik and the Partisan movements, and the rehabilitation of all those who had served in the units of Draža Mihailović during that war, giving them the status of victims of the communist terror. This gave the Chetniks officially equal status as anti-fascists with the Partisans, and their collaboration with German and Italian occupation forces, as well as their crimes against both non-Serbs and Serbs, were simply “forgotten.”

They also remained “forgotten” in history textbooks published after the changes of 2000. The history textbook for the final years of high schools (published in 2002), and the one for the final year of elementary schools (published in 2006), have as their primary goal the reinterpretation and revision of the Second World War. The way in which the war was perceived and discussed there, is completely opposite to how it was viewed and interpreted during the Communist period. The most important change occurred in the discussion of Chetniks and Partisans, but the assessment of the collaborationist government of Milan Nedić changed as well. General Milan Nedić, Serbian Prime Minister under the occupation, is presented as a man “well respected” among the Serbs, who was saving “the biological substance of the Serbian people,” because “he thought that Germany was too powerful at the time, and that he must cooperate with the occupiers, in order to stop further suffering on the part of the Serbian people. Because of the terrible reprisals against the civilians, he was against all the ill-conceived actions against the occupying army.”³⁴ New textbooks also considerably soften the assessment of Dimitrije Ljotić and his Serb Volunteer Corps, who were the main allies of the SS units and Gestapo in mass arrests and crimes all over Serbia. Without mentioning their actual role, they were presented with a sentence that hides more than it reveals: “their ideological fanaticism was greater than that of Communists.”³⁵

However, the most effort was put into changing the image of Chetnik leader Dragoljub “Draža” Mihailović, and his military units. In order for the Partisans and the Chetniks to switch the places of good guys and bad guys, it was necessary to make significant cuts in three basis issues: 1. the interpretation of the relations between Chetniks and Partisans; 2. the issue of collaboration; and 3. the issue of crimes against the civilian population. The essence of the changes was to present the Chetniks as the true and only representatives of Serbian national interests, and to claim that, although they were anti-fascists,

they were eventually betrayed by the Western allies. This “betrayal by the allies” remained unexplained, but was presented as the only explanation of the defeat of the Chetniks. The Chetniks were depicted as the only true movement against the occupiers, as “the core of the Serb civic resistance,” which, “contrary to the communists, who wanted to split up the Serb ethnic space, sought to expand Serbia by incorporating Montenegro, the whole of Bosnia-Herzegovina, part of Dalmatia including Dubrovnik and Zadar, the whole of Srem, including Vukovar, Vinkovci, and Dalj, Kosovo and Metohija, and South Serbia (Macedonia).”³⁶ In this manner the textbook authors redrew the map of the ethnic boundaries in accordance with their wishes.

When considering changes in the interpretation of the relations between the Chetnik and the Partisan movements, they were described as two equal resistance movements, but a number of details reveal which one of these is ideologically closer to the textbook writers. For example, even though it is claimed that these movements were formed at the same time, the first part of the text discusses the Chetniks, while the Partisans appear only some pages later. Or the more obvious example: the picture of Josip Broz Tito appears only on page 8 of the chapter on the Second World War in Yugoslavia, whereas Mihailović’s picture appears already on the first page of that chapter. In the comparative biographies of the two leaders, Draža Mihailović is depicted as “a man who was educated in France and who loved French literature,” while Tito is equally briefly introduced as “the notorious agent of the Comintern.”³⁷

The next question that presented itself as a problem for the textbook writers was the issue of collaboration. In order to remove the responsibility for collaboration from the Chetniks, a number of rhetorical strategies were used, and a number of historical facts hidden. In the 2002 textbook, there were no examples of Chetnik collaboration, but, after criticism from the public, the 2006 textbook presented a number of arguments that essentially justified collaboration. One of them is the constant insistence that all the participants in the war collaborated with the occupation forces, which provides justification for the Chetnik actions. However, this was not enough: so in another place one textbook claims: “Many Chetnik commanders were of the opinion that the Italian army was far less dangerous than the Ustaše: so that they should cease fighting. The Italian occupation was the best “war solution” for the preservation of the Serb’s very existence, espe-

cially in the regions of Lika, Northern Dalmatia, and Herzegovina, and Italian soldiers were the least of evils they had to face.”³⁸

On the other hand, Partisan collaboration is depicted as much more successful and differently motivated. According to the textbook, the Partisans had no intention of taking care of the people, as the Chetniks and Nedić’s forces did, but it is claimed that they began to collaborate with the Germans for clear military goals. Their first war aim was to defeat the Chetniks; so collaboration with the occupiers was supposed to serve them “in order to focus their main thrust onto the Chetniks.” Secondly, the Partisan military strategy and cooperation with the Germans is depicted as a serious war policy, which endangered inter-allied agreements between the United States and the Soviet Union.³⁹

The third issue that led to a major change in the textbooks is the issue of war crimes. In the first textbook after 2000, it was noted that, in liberated territories, the Partisans “imprisoned, tortured, and put before firing squads, not only those suspected of having collaborated with the occupiers but also those whom they considered potential class enemies,” while saying of the Chetniks only that here and there they also were “involved in a merciless civil war.” However, their crimes against non-Serb populations in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina are not mentioned. Following criticisms from the public, the same authors made their stance tougher in the new eighth grade textbook. They still do not mention Chetnik crimes against other Yugoslav peoples, but only against, as they put it “people who hid and helped communists”—which was supposed to absolve them. It is emphasized that these crimes were committed by renegade Chetnik units, which were not controlled by anyone. They also add that “one of the most commonly used methods of intimidation among the Chetniks was beating.”⁴⁰

On the other hand, they claim that the Partisans left behind them “dog cemeteries,” that is to say, unmarked mass graves of their opponents, and that common people feared Partisans, whose “military tribunals condemned people to death without any hesitation (...) Murders in secret and in the open of prominent people, peasants, revenge killings, and murders of the Communist Party members who opposed this, happened almost on a daily basis.”⁴¹

As the Chetnik movement is, in the new textbooks, depicted as the only one that expressed “Serb national interests,” the outcome of the Second World War was reinterpreted. According to the new textbook, Serbia, through the defeat of the Chetniks, found herself on the side of the defeated in the Second World War, demonstrated by the final state-

ment, in bold font in the original: "*In the Second World War, the Serbian citizenry was destroyed, the national movement shattered, and the intelligentsia demolished.*"⁴² Therefore, the Chetnik defeat was equated with the defeat of Serbia, disassociating the nation from the Partisan and anti-fascist tradition, as well as the fact that, along with other Yugoslav peoples, she found herself on the side of the victorious forces as an important ally. Hence, the textbook authors were even ready to change the outcome of the Second World War, and to place Serbia among the defeated Axis powers, in order to put forward their own, Chetnik-friendly version of events.

Such manipulations of historical facts aim at changing the value system, which would re-compose the anti-fascist traditions that were, during the communist period, elevated to the mythical status, into now needed anti-communist; or, as put by the sociologist Todor Kuljić, an anti-anti-fascist order of things. Such flirtings with anti-anti-fascist value systems are always dangerous. Similar experiences in other European societies that went through different kinds of transition from undemocratic into democratic systems are well known. Nevertheless, even though the Serbian case is not unique in that sense, it has some special and additional burdens. These burdens are primarily the result of the problems that the Serbian public has with confronting its recent past, wars in the former Yugoslavia, and mass crimes committed, including the crime of genocide. The fact that, in the course of mass protests, members of extremist groups wore Chetnik symbols from the Second World War, which was also done by various military and paramilitary units during the 1990s wars in Croatia and Bosnia, leads to the identification, in the public sphere, of the Second World War Chetnik movement with the wars of the last decade. This then leads to the frightening conclusion that the teaching of history, though the glorification of the Chetniks and concealment of their crimes, could offer present students, future citizens of this country, the basis for justification and legitimization of the crimes committed during the 1990s.

My critics could now say that the use of the Chetnik symbols by the extreme right wing groups in Serbia is actually an abuse, and that this is a disgusting design of wild bearded men with knives in their teeth, derived from the Chetniks' images in partisan films produced during the communist Yugoslavia, and that "real Chetniks" were a quite different thing. However, even though historical truth is never simple or one-sided, the irrefutable facts about Chetnik collaboration and crimes against non-Serb populations in Croatia and Bosnia, com-

mitted in the name, as it was then put, of creating an ethnically homogeneous Serbia, place the Chetniks ideologically close to their Axis allies who were defeated in the Second World War, as well as to those who claimed to be their successors in the 1990s. That is why the creation of a new value system, through which today's "democratic Serbia" would seek her ideological ancestor in the Chetniks of Draža Mihailović, implies Serbia's dangerous detachment from the anti-fascist values of the modern world, and even more ominous bonding with the values that took her to war in the early 1990s.

I do not wish to sound too pessimistic, but the unpredictable chain of events in contemporary Serbia will determine whether these, in recent years very much emphasized, elements of historical memory will in the future connect themselves into a value system that will permanently distance Serbia from modern societies, or whether she will still find its way to them. This is largely dependent on the role that the science of history, historical consciousness, historical memory, and even history teaching in schools, will acquire.

Notes

- ¹ See more in: Nebojša Popov (ed.), *Srpska strana rata*. (Belgrade: Republika, 1996).
- ² Ružica Rosandić, "Patriotsko vaspitanje u osnovnoškolskim udžbenicima," in Vesna Pešić and Ružica Roksandić (eds.), *Patriotizam, ratništvo, patrijarhalnost* (Belgrade: Centar za antiratne akcije, 1994), p. 42.
- ³ On the Serbian ethno-myth see: Ivan Čolović, *Politika simbola* (Belgrade: B92, 1997).
- ⁴ Drinka Gojković, "Trauma bez kataze," in Popov (ed.), *Srpska strana rata*, pp. 365–393.
- ⁵ Dubravka Stojanović, "Udžbenici istorije kao ogledalo vremena," in Pešić and Roksandić (eds.), *Ratništvo*, pp. 77–105.
- ⁶ Dubravka Stojanović, "Balkan History Workbooks, Consequences and Experiences," in *European Studies*, Vol. 7, University of Tokyo (2008): 157–163.
- ⁷ Ernest Renan, *Šta je nacija*, (Belgrade: Plato, 1998), p. 18.
- ⁸ See more in: Ivan Čolović, *Bordel ratnika*, (Belgrade: XX vek, 1994).
- ⁹ Stojanović, "Udžbenici istorije," pp. 80–85.
- ¹⁰ Ibid, pp. 86–87.
- ¹¹ More: Dubravka Stojanović, *Srbija i demokratija. Istorijski ogled o zlatnom dobu srpske demokratije*, (Belgrade: Udruženje za društvenu istoriju, 2003). pp. 375–421.
- ¹² Ibid, p. 376.
- ¹³ *Osmansko carstvo; Nacije i nastanak nacionalnih država; Balkanski ratovi; Drugi svetski rat*, ed. Kristina Kuluri, Dubravka Stojanović, (Belgrade: Prosvetni pregled, 2005).
- ¹⁴ "They are rewriting our History! An anti-Hellenic propaganda tentacle is hitting us from everywhere!" *To Paron*, (12 November 2006).
- ¹⁵ M. Lygeros, "Against History: The New History Books," događaj koji je organizovala Political Association for Democracy and the Homeland, Thessaloniki (12 February 2007), Makedonia Palace Hotel.
- ¹⁶ *Danas* (Belgrade), 24 January 2006.
- ¹⁷ For more on that subject, see Čolović, *Politika simbola*, pp. 13–29.
- ¹⁸ Karl Popper, *Otvoreno društvo i njegovi neprijatelji* (Belgrade: Plato, 1998).
- ¹⁹ Nikola Gaćeša, Lj. Mladenović-Maksimović, and D. Maksimović, *Istorija za 8. razred* (Belgrade: Zavod za izdavanje udžbenika, 1993), p. 156.
- ²⁰ See: Dubravka Stojanović, "Construction of Historical Consciousness: The Case of Serbian History Textbooks," in Maria Todorova (ed.), *Balkan Identities. Nation and Memory* (London: Hurst, 2004), pp. 327–339.
- ²¹ Stojanović, "Udžbenici istorije," p. 93.
- ²² Ibid., pp. 90–98.
- ²³ For more about that subject, see Stojanović, "Udžbenici istorije," pp. 92–93.

- ²⁴ Suzana Rajić, Kosta Nikolić, and Nebojša Jovanović, *Istorija za 8. razred* (Belgrade: Zavod za izdavanje udžbenika, 2005), p. 94.
- ²⁵ Stojanovic, "Udžbenici istorije," pp. 94–96.
- ²⁶ Boško Vlahović and Bogoljub Mihailović, *Priroda i društvo za 3. razred osnovne škole* (Belgrade: Zavod za izdavanje udžbenika, 1997).
- ²⁷ *Ibid.*
- ²⁸ Gaćeša et al., *Istorija za 8. razred*, p. 172.
- ²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 173.
- ³⁰ Boško Vlahović and Bogoljub Mihailović, *Priroda i društvo*, p. 56
- ³¹ Kosta Nikolić, Nikola Žutić, Momčilo Pavlović, and Zorica Špadijer, *Istorija za 3. i 4. razred gimnazije*, (Belgrade: Zavod za izdavanje udžbenika, 2005) p. 76.
- ³² More in: Dubravka Stojanović, "DOS: otvaranje traumatičnog kruga?" *Republika*, No. 286–287, 1 June 2002, pp. 23–42.
- ³³ For more on that subject, see Sulejman Bosto, Tihomir Cipek, Olivera Milosavljević (eds.), *Kultura sjećanja: 1941. Povjesni lomovi i svladavanje prošlosti* (Zagreb: Disput, 2008).
- ³⁴ Nikolić et al., *Udžbenik za 3 i 4 razred gimnazije*, pp. 147.
- ³⁵ *Ibid.*
- ³⁶ Rajić et al., *Istorija za 8. razred*, p. 140.
- ³⁷ Nikolić et al., *Istorija za 3. i 4. razred gimnazije*, pp. 142–143.
- ³⁸ Rajić et al., *Istorija za 8. razred*, p. 152–153.
- ³⁹ Rajić et al., *Istorija za 8. razred*, p. 154.
- ⁴⁰ Nikolić et al., *Istorija za 3. i 4. razred gimnazije*, p. 161.
- ⁴¹ Rajić et al., *Istorija za 8. razred*, p. 152.
- ⁴² *Ibid.*

Nationalism as a Religion: Examples from Contemporary Serbia

Ivan Čolović

I propose that we first visit Hilandar, joining those who are doing a pilgrimage to this holy place. As you probably already know, Hilandar is a monastery at the foot of the Holy Mountain, that is, Mount Athos, on the Halkidikki Peninsula in Greece. At the end of the 12th century, it was restored and made into a Serbian monastery by Rastko Nemanjić, St. Sava, the first archbishop of an independent Serbian Orthodox church, and by his father Stefan Nemanja, the Grand Župan (Grand Prince) and the founder of the Nemanjić dynasty, who took his monastic orders under the name of St. Simeon. That is why Hilandar has played a particularly important role in the history of the Serbian Orthodox Church as well as in Serbian political history. That is also why it has long been a privileged destination of pilgrimages undertaken by Orthodox Serbs, as well as of those who have wanted to become acquainted with the monastery to which the very beginnings of the Serbian medieval state are linked. During the last twenty years or so, after the fall of the communist regime of Yugoslavia and the disintegration of the country, the number of pilgrimages to Hilandar has markedly increased.¹ An example was set by Milošević, who visited Hilandar on 17 April 1991.²

Rather than keeping company with Milošević, we shall join a group of pilgrims made up of team members and members of the Board of Directors of the Belgrade-based football club “Partizan.” They visited Hilandar on 5 and 6 October 2001, ten years after Milošević did, in order to mark the 56th anniversary of their club’s inception. In the December 2001 issue of the club’s newspaper, *Partizan Only*, there is a lengthy story of this visit, illustrated by photographs. It was written by one of the members of the Board of Directors. He recounts how well the athletes were received, how the hosts acquainted them with the monastic way of life, how they tasted the humble monastic food and drank the white wine made by the monks. It turned out that some

of the monks were “Partizan” fans. One of them explained: “Your club colors (black and white—translator’s note) make you the closest to us monks.” At the end of the group’s stay, each football player received a certificate of the visit, its facsimile also being published in the club paper. The document states: “This testimonial of the holy Serbian Imperial seed of the monastery Hilandar issued to the sports club *Partizan*, which has visited our monastery and bowed before the cradle of Saint-Savian spirituality.”

What does this event reveal? Does this collective visit by a football club to Hilandar indicate that the spread of the Orthodox faith has lately been on the increase throughout Serbia, and that the Orthodox Church now has so many faithful as to include players and administrators of the football club “Partizan”? That would mean that this visit was organized for the purpose of satisfying their religious needs. If I may be permitted to say so, I doubt it. It is hard to believe that all within that organization are believers, and within one and the same Confession at that. I would venture to say that we are closer to the truth of the matter if we say that we are dealing here with a marketing strategy. But what would the purpose of such marketing be, what is accomplished by it, what kind of an image is the club *Partizan* attempting to create of itself by going to Hilandar?

Here, I am compelled to doubt that, by visiting the Hilandar monks, *Partizan* wanted to represent itself as a club of pious young men, Orthodox believers. It is more likely that *Partizan* embarked upon this journey in order to show the Serbian public, and especially its fans, that it is a club with a strong national identity, loyal to Serbian national history and tradition. That this was the main goal of this pilgrimage was confirmed as well by the statements given at a press conference, held just before the departure for Mount Athos, by the club vice-president, Ratimir Babić, and the club’s spokesman, Slobodan Novaković. “This visit to Hilandar, the heart of Serbian spirituality means a lot to us,” Babić said, adding: “In these times of turmoil it will be a good move and a nice gesture that will bring us closer to the culture of the Serbian people.” Likewise, the spokesman depicted the Hilandar trip as a “journey into the heart of Serbian tradition.” He cited an interesting fact that this would be a return visit, or, as he put it, “a continued fusion between football and the highest values of Serbian spirituality,” since Hilandar monks had been the guests of the football club *Partizan* in the spring of 1997, when they participated in the consecration of the club’s stadium.³

Speaking of Hilandar, these club officials have clearly chosen formulations which do not define the monastery as a sacred shrine of the Orthodox faith and the Serbian Orthodox Church, but are rather linking it to a broadly understood Serbian tradition and culture, that is, to a spirituality they both call “Serbian.” They are attempting to tie their club to a kind of spirituality, qualified as an attribute of nationality, lending it thus Serbian national identity. In today’s Serbia, it is, no doubt, a desirable identity for all who participate in social life, including the athletes. The football club *Partizan* needs this emphasis on Serbian identity that much more as it came into existence in 1954 as a club representing The Yugoslav People’s Army, and insofar as it was tied by its very name to Yugoslav communism, and to Tito and his guerrilla fighters.⁴ Hilandar fits into this marketing campaign the aim of which is the “Serbification” of *Partizan*, possible insofar as this monastery is not only a religious holy place, but is endowed with perhaps an even more important role as a symbolic cradle of the Serbian nationhood and statehood, representing thus a national shrine, which all Serbs are called upon to respect and to which all Serbs should show reverence.

Now, we shall—uninvited again—join another group of pilgrims to Hilandar. It consists of the Prime Minister of Serbia, Vojislav Koštunica, two of his cabinet ministers, one of his advisors, and a poet close to the Prime Minister and to the Church.⁵ They visited the monastery on 17 September 2006. At that point, Koštunica was campaigning in favor of a new Serbian Constitution, in which the greatest novelty was the preamble stating that Kosovo is an inalienable part of Serbia. In fact, it was this campaign that brought the Prime Minister to Hilandar. For he had estimated that it would be the most appropriate—or, in his own words, “the most natural”—place from which to launch an appeal to the Serbs to get out of their homes and vote for the new constitution in the referendum that had just been announced. An article reporting on this visit to Hilandar by Koštunica, published in *Politika* under the title *Kosovo the heart of Serbia* begins as follows: “Amid the sound of church bells and monks’ chanting, the Prime Minister placed, inside the very monastery building, a ritual kiss on the icon of the Most Holy ‘Three-Handed Mother of God,’ expressing to assembled monks of the Holy Mountain the message that ‘this day at Hilandar’ was a ‘true occasion for all of us to experience once more the truth that Kosovo is the heart of Serbia and the soul of our people.’”⁶

Koštunica too, not unlike the football players of *Partizan*, used this visit to get acquainted with monastic life. But, while the football play-

ers were, seemingly, mostly interested in what one could eat and drink there, the Prime Minister wanted to verify the sleeping conditions in the monastery. The *Politika* reporter paid particular attention to that facet of the visit, and did his best to evoke vividly, for his readers, Koštunica's experience of monastic slumber. "The Prime Minister Koštunica spent the night on this island of spirituality, in one of the cells," he writes. "With the air filled by monks' soft chanting and prayers and by the scent of burning candles and peculiar monastic liturgical incense, time spent in liturgy and worship flows as though it were not of this world."

Also, similarly to the *Partizan* football players, Koštunica found his own fans in Hilandar. As *Politika* relates, Father Methodius, the monastery Superior, promised, in his address to the Prime Minister and his entourage, that "the brotherhood of the monastery, all forty of them, would pray for the spiritual survival of the Serbian people and of the Serbian Orthodox Church, just as Koštunica has fought for the preservation of Montenegro, and now for that of Kosovo and Metohije." The failure of Koštunica's struggle, of which Father Methodius couldn't possibly have been unaware—at least concerning Montenegro, which had declared its independence on 3 June 2006, that is, three months before the Prime Minister's visit to Hilandar—did not discourage Father Methodius from pointing at that struggle to his brothers as an example to follow.

Still, I see as the most important similarity between these two pilgrimages to Hilandar the fact that both have been undertaken for purposes far removed from religion in the strict sense of the word. Undoubtedly, both cases represent marketing operations. Koštunica's visit to this monastery was political marketing, with an overt intention of getting the Serbian electorate to accept the Prime Minister's so-called "national" policy, more specifically, his moves regarding the Kosovo issue. Neither Koštunica and his entourage nor the football officials and players of *Partizan* went there to provide for their own religious needs, or to demonstrate to the Serbian public their Orthodox faith—even though they were more avowed believers in the Prime Minister's delegation than among the pilgrims from the football club *Partizan*. They went there, not to bow before a holy of holies of the Eastern Orthodox faith and of the Serbian Orthodox Church, but to commune with the Serbian national spirit, which cohabits, in that place, with the Holy Spirit of the Orthodox Christianity.

Therefore, both of these examples of pilgrimage to Hilandar show

how a religious sacred thing, the holy place of a religion with a long tradition, can be used in order to realize a benefit with which, in essence, neither that religion nor any other traditional confession concern themselves, the benefit being the promotion of certain personalities and groups. In these two cases, the personalities and the groups were from the worlds of sport and politics. However, I hope that you will agree with me that not everything on this issue has been said so far, and that we cannot be satisfied with the mere conclusion that we have here a use of religion for purposes extraneous to it.

We cannot be satisfied with it primarily because these two pilgrimages, in spite of the apparent intention of their participants, by bowing to Hilandar, to improve their prospects of successfully selling their wares in their respective sports and political markets, have not lost all the markings of a religious ritual. Even though they are not pilgrimages in the strict sense, these visits to Hilandar have retained the basic characteristics of bowing before a holy place, a place to which the very source of a religious Confession is linked. We are not dealing here with some traditional Confession, but with a sort of secular religion the core of which is the cult of a nation, specifically, the Serbian nation.

The likelihood of this being some sort of a non-traditional religious cult is supported by what Koštunica stated about Hilandar, about the spiritual messages the monastery carries, and about those for whom the said messages are intended.

Serbia knows how to preserve and cherish its values, and Hilandar is one of our people's most handsome jewels. Just as there is not a single member of our nation who does not know what Kosovo means to us, there is no one who wouldn't know what Hilandar means. And it is precisely because of that, because of the meaning of the messages Kosovo and Hilandar carry through history, through time, that we will do and are doing everything we can to make sure that something that must be truly is.

Thus, Koštunica defines this monastery of the Serbian Orthodox Church as a national treasure, as something that belongs to the Serbian people at large, not only to the Orthodox Serbs. However, this does not mean that he secularizes the monastery. The connection between Hilandar and the Serbian people, mentioned here by our Prime Minister, possesses all the traits of religious communication, and the Serbian people are represented here as some kind of a community of believers. The monastery is an institution, which remains independent of time

and history, which serves to provide a spiritual channel for the people. Those meanings are not arrived at through learning and intellectual effort; they are latent in every individual belonging to the people, so that that individual does not learn them, but merely recognizes them within him or herself in contact with a medium of the national spirit, such as, for instance, the monastery Hilandar. That contact is a sort of test. If it should happen that somebody might not recognize and receive the message coming through this sacred thing, it would surely mean that this person does not belong to the Serbian people, and may even be an intruder or enemy. Because—as the Prime Minister emphasized—“there is not a single member of our nation who does not know what Hilandar means.” It is clear, therefore, that he views the Serbian nation as a national-religious community, broader than the community of the Serbian Orthodox faithful. One would say that he implies that the latter, together with its Church, is naturally included, as it were, in an all-Serbian faith, which is the worship of a deified nation.

That the spiritual messages to the Serbian people carried “through time” by Hilandar are not religious in any strict sense of that word is manifest in the fact that their other medium—concurrently with the Holy Mountain monastery—is a secular entity, Kosovo. For Koštunica does not link Hilandar with Orthodox religious sacred things in Kosovo and Metohije, but with Kosovo as a symbol of Serbian national identity, with mythical Kosovo, which is—in his own words—“the heart of Serbia and of the Serbian people.” Identical messages to the people are brought “through history, through time, by Kosovo and Hilandar.” It is clear that the immediate goal of this, one could say, mystical linking of the so-called “southern Serbian province” to one of the major sacred things of the Serbian Orthodox Church is raising the stake in the struggle to keep Kosovo within the borders of Serbia, the struggle into which Koštunica has invested the bulk of his own political capital. Joined by Hilandar, Kosovo takes on a more valuable symbolic meaning. On the other hand, that clearly does not enhance its Orthodox character. Conversely, Hilandar—linked to the “Kosovar sacred thing” has come closer to the spirit embodied by that sacred thing, that is, to the Serbian religion of nation, to the Serbian nationalism as a religion. It has, itself, become a sacred thing of that religion.

This, if I may say so, spiritual transformation of Hilandar is an example of one of the two basic and complementary processes through which a quasi-religious worship of a nation comes into being, at least as far as the Serbian version of that sort of thing is concerned. Nation-

alizing, “Serbifying” this monastery of the Serbian Orthodox Church is an example of the first one of the two processes in which the secularization of sacred things of a traditional religion takes place through a transfer of their sacredness,⁷ through their conversion into sacred things of a religion worshipping a deified nation. What is interesting is that not only do men of the cloth and dignitaries of the Serbian Orthodox Church look upon this transfer of sacredness with approbation, but they also actively participate in it, as they do not see a competitor in the secular religion of nationalism, but an ally instead, and as if they were ready to place their vast arsenal of holy things at its disposal.

In the opposite direction, a process is taking place of consecrating certain lay personalities, events, places, or man-made things, such as important personalities of the national history, the national language, or monuments of national culture. Naturally, such consecration does not lead to religious fundamentalism, as it tends toward an autonomous spiritual principle at the very foundation of the nation. That is the manner in which the process of transforming the geographical and historical Kosovo into a holy place of Serbian nationalism is taking place these days.⁸

During the communist era in Yugoslavia, such a political religion, with an ethnically defined nation as the main cult object, would only have been a sort of a heresy, since the communist regime had constructed its own system of secular religious rituals, symbols, and myths at whose center was the cult of the head of the regime, Tito, who played the part of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost of all the Yugoslavs. It was only the fall of communism, the wars and the disintegration of Yugoslavia, at the end of the eighties and during the early nineties of the past century, that made possible the renewal of a political religion based upon the consecration of particular nationalities, whose members had lived in a common state for over 70 years. It was not long before—in addition to the Serbian nation—the Slovenian, the Croatian, the Macedonian, the Bosnian, and the Montenegrin nations became sacred objects for their own members, that is, before national symbols, rituals and myths replaced the communist and the Yugoslav political religion, before the cult of brotherhood and unity was replaced by the idolatry of the nation.⁹ Thus, along with the efforts made by the strongest churches on the territory of the former Yugoslavia to impose themselves upon their people as national, with a propaganda slogan—one nation, one state, one faith—there emerged sets of beliefs and rituals with the nation itself as the object of a cult.

The demise of communism brought about a renewal of a religious way of relating to nation also in former communist countries other than Yugoslavia. In the words of the Italian historian Emilio Gentile, “an unexpected and often violent awakening of the cult of the nation took place; a danger emerged in the form of new political religions coming out of fundamentalist, intolerant and exclusive nationalisms, religions with strong ethnocentric and racist connotations.”¹⁰ The renewal of the cult of the nation comes as a surprise, at least in Europe, because it emerges at the beginning of the third millennium, at a time when consecration of politics, in Gentile’s own words, “seems to be everywhere in recession.”¹¹ It seemed as though nationalism would disappear from the scene as a religion—at least from the main stage—along with its competitor communism and its symbols, myths and rituals. It was expected that their respective histories would come to an end in the twentieth century, that they both had spent their resources in the religious war they waged in the course of this century. “The short twentieth century,” E. J. Hobsbawm writes, “was a period of religious wars, even though the most belligerent and bloodthirsty among faiths at war were secular ideologies of the twentieth century, such as socialism and nationalism, which had replaced gods with abstractions and politicians which were worshipped as divinities.”¹² But undoubtedly, religion of the nation displays—as our examples amply testify—vitality greater than that of its former communist competitor.

That is why the burning question—quite plausibly not only in Serbia and other formerly communist countries—is to what extent the religion of the nation threatens the value system upon which liberal democratic society rests. It is not my intention to get involved in a discussion of the historical or politico-philosophical relationship between nationalism and democracy. Nevertheless, you probably expect me to say if I think that the examples of religious worship of the Serbian nation I introduced to you—the two pilgrimages to Hilandar—are in contradiction with democratic values or that they can somehow be reconciled with them.

I will agree with you if you tell me that the license and even the irony with which I have spoken of it can mean both. First and foremost, my license to speak of them so “sacrilegiously”—and I would like to stress it—indicates that I see in these pilgrimages to Hilandar rituals from which one should distance oneself precisely out of respect for one of the fundamental values of democracy, the respect for the sovereign individual and his right not to be reduced to a mere member

of a national politico-religious community. But, on the other hand, the license and irony with which I have spoken of these examples of nationalistic rituals—and I am not alone in doing so—can also mean that these rituals are not binding for everybody in today's Serbia, that their organizers and practitioners—even when they call the non-participants “traitors”—have resigned themselves to the fact that they do not live in a monolithic religious community, and that they have to recognize the legitimacy of other communities, parties, as well as to the scandalous fact that there are even those who laugh at them. My ironic discourse on political pilgrimages to Hilandar signifies that as well.

I shall attempt now to expound the two meanings of my analysis of the political pilgrimages to Hilandar in a different manner, and—despite their irreconcilability at the first glance—to tie them together, somehow, into a coherent conclusion. To that end, I shall resort to a distinction between two classes of political religion, proposed by Gentile. He set on one side *civic religions*, compatible with democratic society, and on the other side *political religions*, proper, for the most part, to totalitarian societies. The civic religions, Gentile says, are recognizable in that they do not link themselves to the ideology of a political movement; they recognize the principle of the separation of church and state, they recognize the existence of a supreme being, but do not identify with any particular Confession, offering themselves “as a supra-Confessional common civic *creed* which allows the individual broad autonomy with regard to the community, and as a rule, follows the consensus with regard to the rules of public morality and collective liturgy.” If we were looking for some of these traits of civic religion in the above described examples of politico-religious pilgrimages to Hilandar, we could conclude it could be the image of the Serbian nation as a community of believers above politics and confession, as it is made up of all the Serbs assembled around the common cult of an ethnically defined nation.

We shall still find much more numerous common points between our examples of pilgrimage and the kind of consecration of politics Gentile calls political religion. “It is,” he says,

a form of consecration of politics that is exclusive and fundamentalist by its very nature; it accepts no coexistence with other ideologies and political movements, denies the individual all autonomy with regard to the group, imposes rules and participation in a political cult, and allows use of violence as a legitimate defense against ene-

mies as well as a means of accomplishing renewal; it is hostile to institutionalized religion, striving to eradicate it, or conversely, to establish a relationship of symbiotic coexistence with it, while, in that case, trying to draw traditional religion into its system of beliefs and myths, reducing it to a role of a subordinate, auxiliary means.¹³

We have already seen that *Partizan* and its players as well as Koštunica and his entourage bow before Hilandar as a symbol of the only faith possible if one is a Serb, as a well spring of a spiritual experience, accessible only to the so called members of the nation, faith including the Orthodox religion as well as the political religion of Serbian nationalism.

Therefore, the Serbian nationalism as a religion—if we may judge by the examples reviewed here—is closer to the type of consecration of politics Gentile calls political religion than to the other class he calls civic religion. More precisely, its theologico-political discourse—including discourse in the narrower sense of the word as well as that of rituals and symbols—renders it incompatible with the values of democratic society, so that the fact that it is needed by a sports club and that even the very peak of political power resorts to it is a sign that the so called democratic project in Serbia is something requiring a whole lot more work. But also the fact that in today's Serbia the cult of the nation and the theologico-nationalist discourse no longer have the terrifying power they had in the decade of the nineties of the twentieth century indicates that this sort of political religion is on the defensive here, forced—contrary to its very nature—into being satisfied with only a part of the public sphere, with living in democracy. Even when the high priest of such a cult is the Prime Minister, the cult is not bound to become exclusive, to rally behind itself all kinds of dreams, narratives, ideals, celebrations, to fuse it all into a single faith, into nationalism as a religion. Naturally, this state of affairs may change for better or for worse. Being without a single member of society, a single person who does not believe in you and your gods is always an irresistible temptation.

Translated from Serbian by Vladimir Arandjelović

Notes

- ¹ The Society of the Friends of Hilandar, “St. Milutin,” from Leskovac, one of ten or so organizations and agencies whose business is religious tourism, indicates on its web site that it organizes group visits (25–30 members at a time) to Hilandar at least five to six times per year, while individual visits and those by smaller groups are more frequent.
- ² “Contrary to all protocol, he arrived aboard a helicopter (one the total of five that came, to be exact) that landed smack in the middle of the monastery courtyard. According to some reports, his greeting was ‘Hello’, ‘Hello, comrade Abbot’, to others, and ‘Hello, priest’, to others still differently. Anyway, the monks had vacated the monastery immediately before the visit, added an extra lent to their monastic regimen, ritually ‘cleansed’ every spot on the premises that had been touched by presidential foot, and gave up on raising tomatoes where the helicopters had touched down.” Tamara Skrozza, “Sveta gora: Požar stoleća,” in *Vreme* (Belgrade), no. 688 (10 March 2004).
- ³ Quoted from the web site of the Toronto based Serbian language newspaper *Independent News* (www.novine.ca). According to a report in *Politika* of 4 October 2001, Babić had stated: “A visit to such a holy place means a lot to us, as it brings us closer to the tradition of Serbian spirituality.”
- ⁴ Names reminiscent of the communist era were retained by *Crvena zvezda* (Red Star) in Belgrade and by *Dinamo* (Dynamo) from Zagreb. The new government of Croatia did attempt to change Dinamo into *Kroacija* (Croatia), but the fans did not permit it. Nevertheless, keeping the old names prevented neither “Red Star” nor “Dynamo”—during the nineties’ decade of the past century—from becoming, respectively, symbols of Serbian and Croatian nationalism. (Concerning “nationalization” of Red Star refer to my text “Football, the Hooligans and the War,” in: Ivan Čolović, *The Politics of Symbol in Serbia: Essays on Political Anthropology*, trans. from Serbian by Celia Hawkesworth (London: Hurst & Co., 2002).
- ⁵ They were the minister of police, Dragan Jočić, the Metropolitan of the Montenegrin and coastal region, Amfilohije, the advisor Vladeta Janković, and the poet Matija Bećković. *Politika* (18 September 2006).
- ⁶ Aleksandar Apostolovski : “Kosovo—srce Srbije,” *Politika* (18 September 2006).
- ⁷ I am borrowing the expression “transfer of sacredness” from: Mona Ozouf, *La fête révolutionnaire 1789–1799*, (Gallimard, 1989) p. 441.
- ⁸ More can be found about the conversion of the Serbian national heritage into nationalism as a religion in my works “Priests of Language: The Nation, Poetry and the Cult of Language,” in: R. Bugarski & Hawkesworth (eds.), *Language in the Former Yugoslav Lands* (Bloomington, Indiana: Slavica, 2004), pp. 295–304, “Nacionalne svetinje i tolerancija,” *Dubina*, pp. 194–195.

- ⁹ On the cult of brotherhood and unity consult Vjekoslav Perica, *Balkanski Idoli Religija i nacionalizam u jugoslovenskim državama*. Translated from English by S. Glisic and S. Miletic, (Belgrade: Biblioteka XX vek, 2006), Vol. I: 224–241. Perica defines brotherhood and unity as “Yugoslav civic religion” and as “a cornerstone of new Yugoslav nationalism.” Unlike this author, I employ the term nationalism only in the sense of ethno-nationalism.
- ¹⁰ Emilio Gentile, *Les Religions de la politique. Entre démocraties et totalitarismes*, trans. from Italian by Anna Colao (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 2005).
- ¹¹ For the French political philosopher Marcel Gauchet the period of consecration of politics is already behind us, and this ending represents a great “spiritual event of our fin-de-siècle: we have seen, without being aware of the importance of the event, the passing before our very eyes of the revolutionary faith in salvation on this earth.” Gauchet refers here, above all, to the communist faith, but his diagnosis applies to every form of “consecration of history” (Gauchet 22–23), as well as to religious beliefs as such. “We have seen” he writes, “that the possibility of consecrating history has ceased to exist because the communist cause perished due to the undoing of the very foundations of the faith, and not because its disagreement with reality was too great.”
- ¹² E. J. Hobsbawm, *L'Age des extrêmes: le court vingtième siècle, 1914–1991* (Paris: Ed. Complexe, 2000), p. 512. Cited according to Gentile, *Les Religions*, p. 264.
- ¹³ Gentile, *Les Religion*, p. 259.

Engendering Political Responsibility: Transitional Justice in Serbia

*Daša Duhaček**

In the wake of the May 2008 elections in Serbia—one of many—it has to be acknowledged that after eight years of what one might have hoped would be a structural change, a turn to the undoubtedly democratic, pro-European policy, this political option has *not* in fact enjoyed the support of the majority of Serbian citizens. Without going into a detailed breakdown of political choices, what testifies to this assessment is the fact that the parliamentary elections in May 2008 offered the following outcomes: one, the creation of a government of the conservative ultra-right Serbian Radical Party, two, new elections and three, the desirable one—but, only in comparison to the first two—a government of democrats in an unholy alliance with the Socialist Party (of the late President Slobodan Milošević). Therefore—and *nota bene*: as a result of the elections—the option of a government formed by the Democratic Party, perhaps in a coalition with the Liberal Democratic Party, was not available.¹ After the events in October 2000 and an all too brief period before the assassination of Zoran Đinđić in March 2003, during which there were signs that the transition to democracy had a beginning, there followed a period of continuity with the policies of Milošević and the ideology of Serbian nationalism.

There is a grim warning that Hannah Arendt voiced on the concluding pages of *The Origins of Totalitarianism* “[T]otalitarian solutions may well survive the fall of totalitarian regimes in the form of strong temptations which will come up whenever it seems impossible to alleviate political social or economic misery in a manner worthy of man.”² If the policy of the Serbian regime in the 90s, was rightly named (soft)

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totalitarian and/or authoritarian, then the aftermath of overthrowing the Milošević regime could certainly provide an example of the “temptations of totalitarian solutions” and—after a brief intermezzo from October 2000 until March 2003—the continued survival of the totalitarian solutions themselves.

The many analyses have mostly concluded with a consensus that Serbia has not yet dealt with its recent past.³ Articulating what is perhaps one of the key elements in understanding this state of affairs, Nenad Dimitrijević considers the (Serbian) case of a *collective crime* as opposed to the *crime of the regime*, the main difference being that the former is predicated on a certain consensus between the regime and its citizens, whereas in the latter case the regime cannot count on support of the citizens; and adds: “Nazi Germany and Serbia during the Milošević era could represent a good example.”⁴ Along similar lines James Gow and Milena Michalski claim: “The most significant ... test of Serbia’s loss of morality concerned the legacy of war crimes. (...) This form of denial continued ... More troubling was the degree to which there was still a tendency in a sizeable chunk of the population to reject any suggestion of culpability...”⁵ Eric Gordy, after thoroughly exploring all the aspects of how Serbia is dealing with its recent past reminds us that this matters precisely because “... a serious confrontation with the recent past is a necessary precondition for a relatively free move toward the future, ...”⁶ To date, most of the decisions that are not only made by the governing structures but in effect supported by the citizens of Serbia stem from nurturing the nationalist myth, politics and policy.

This text will, by unfolding its key concepts (i.e., engendering political responsibility and transitional justice, respectively), form a mosaic, which, when placed in the context of the public scene of Serbia today, can offer a possible account for the present state of affairs. It is especially important to reveal a connection between political responsibility and transitional justice since the state of affairs in Serbia is such that it requires establishing political responsibility *in order* for transitional justice to take place.

At the outset I would like to recall and stress what is today the double meaning of engendering which has very much been in use in feminist theorizing and political practices: one, its mainstream usage—which we should not to lose sight of—meaning, to bring about and provoke; and two, to infuse with an/other perspective, or, perspective of the other, not necessarily women. This second meaning should be

deployed carefully so as not to amount to a formula of “add women and stir.” It is an approach, often missing, that is primarily concerned with the model, rather than a specific content, manifestation, or how it may be exemplified, since a strictly prescribed content is in danger of defeating the purpose. It is therefore, as one may assume, not necessarily centered around the position of women or the perspective on women; it is even less so in the interest of women, or even the so-called values that “women” may be expected to introduce. This is not to say that invaluable insights into values cannot be deduced from an engendered perspective.

The concept of responsibility is linked, within the framework of classical liberal theory, with concepts of obligation, consent, duty and other attributes of citizenship, even within the mainstream liberal tradition. As John Locke explained more than 300 years ago, *tacit consent* may be assumed on the part of anyone “that hath any Possession, or Enjoyment, of any part of the Dominions of any Government, doth thereby give his *tacit Consent*, and is as far forth obliged to Obedience to the Laws of that Government, during such Enjoyment, as any one under it.”⁷

If this concept is coupled first and foremost, at one end of the continuum of recent political choices in Serbia, with a fact that at the beginning of the 1990s the elections which placed and then kept Milošević in power were not rigged inasmuch as they gave him support and finally, at the other end of the continuum, with all the instances of charging, indicting, prosecuting, processing and condemning for crimes committed during the wars from 1991–1999, then we have a coherent framework where the political ideology of the so called Greater Serbia—along with territorial aspirations—was in fact supported by a critical mass of the Serbian citizenry. The fact that this support was for the majority passive, constitutes what Locke called ‘tacit consent’, which is in keeping with Arendt’s argument on the necessity of acknowledging collective responsibility.⁸

Evolving under the de/pressing events of the 20th century, one feminist approach has been delineated by Adrienne Rich in her text on *Politics of Location*. In this text she claims that whereas during the first half of the century, it may have been understandable for Virginia Woolf to state, “as a woman I have no country,”⁹ towards the end of that century a shift was necessary, so that, again as a feminist Rich finds herself compelled to reverse that statement and say, “As a woman I have a country; as a woman *I cannot divest myself of that country...*”¹⁰ What

Adrienne Rich announces here is a statement of accountability for the political community she belongs to, regardless of the fact—or perhaps precisely owing to the fact—that she does not condone its policy. Her premise here was “[R]ecognizing our location, having to name the ground we are coming from (...) I began to experience ...a location for which *I need to take responsibility*.”¹¹ Therefore, Rich offers a theoretical framework for some, albeit rare, political practices in Serbia. Importantly, to the extent that they do exist, these political practices are executed mostly by individual women, women’s groups; and, in some cases these groups overlap with feminists; an exemplary case is a feminist pacifist group, Women in Black (their work will be addressed below). It is significant that this conceptualization of accountable citizenship leads from the concept of politically responsible *individuals* towards political *communities* that will develop their collective political responsibility.¹² Furthermore, I argue that without the preferably explicit or, at least, implicit concept of collective political responsibility as an integral part of a policy, no political community can seriously and effectively move forward towards implementing what is today commonly referred to as transitional justice.

Transitional justice is here understood to be a potential attribute of a complex transitional process from any authoritarian/totalitarian system to a democracy; and consists of a set of steps taken, decisions made and implemented so as to rectify the moral, legal, political, and social injustices and/or their consequences.¹³ The term should fall back on its core meaning of *establishing justice*, or, as the case may be, re-establishing justice; in Hannah Arendt’s terminology it would mean overcoming “evil as a policy”; the phrases “coming to terms with the past” or “overcoming the past” are also in use.¹⁴ Transitional justice, though very much based in judicial processes also includes a much broader range of elements, such as social, political, cultural, etc. It includes primarily legal measures, but, since these for the most part rarely suffice, a whole set of mechanisms proves to be necessary. Although these mechanisms may be introduced and even implemented by way of law, they run more deeply into the fabric of society and when coordinated produce effective results. These are truth and reconciliation commissions, lustration, opening the dossiers of political police, rehabilitation of political prisoners, reparations, denationalization, and finally, building memorials, taking testimonials—where we come full circle to issues of truth.

In Serbia, another problem from the outset is in the term *transition*, the question being what the point of departure of the process is.¹⁵ Is it from real socialism to a parliamentary democracy, the criteria being the first multiparty elections in the early 1990s; or, is it the transition from a “soft totalitarianism”/authoritarianism of the Milošević regime to its downfall in October 2000; or, if the brief period between October 2000 and March 2003 has just given some insight as to how long and winding the road is, does then the transition still lie ahead? After the elections in May 2008 and what can be a potential move forward, given the fact that, as a result of negotiations, the Democratic Party now holds the key decision making positions, the question of where Serbia is in the process of transition has often been raised. According to some, the process will only start, when there is transparency—presently still lacking—for the process of executive decision making.

I argue that now and still the key issue remains: how does Serbia address its recent past, since this is a strong prerequisite to foreclose what Hannah Arendt named “the survival of totalitarian ideology.” In this context, transitional justice in Serbia is still a goal to be reached; if we consider, on the one hand the state affairs in Serbia, and, on the other the concept of transitional justice, the relation between them, the reality and the ideal, are so far apart that (transitional) *justice in Serbia* is still almost an oxymoron.

This is the case whether we look at the perception of indictments and indictees, or according to most of the surveys conducted from 2001¹⁶ up to 2005 and later¹⁷; as these surveys show the majority of the Serbian population did not accept the political responsibility of Serbia for the wars fought from 1991–1999 and consequently neither did the citizens of Serbia accept the responsibility for the war crimes committed during the same period; for example, in one of the surveys, 74% of Serbian citizens believe that the Serbs committed the least number of war crimes and 81% believe that Serbs were the greatest victims of these wars!¹⁸

At this point in time, I believe that the focus should be directed toward a process of *self-reflection within Serbia*. If Serbia is to go through a successful transitional process, then all those who constitute its citizenry have to face the truth about the acts of crime committed in Serbia’s recent past *in their name*; they should recognize that this implied, at the very least, their tacit consent. It is my contention that what construes complicity follows directly from the status of citizenship. Moreover, the citizens of Serbia should see to it that the active

participants in these misdeeds will be dealt with in criminal procedures with the utmost efficiency.

Is there a political subject of this process in Serbia? Naming the subject of these processes invariably involves generalizations, which may indicate a misleading conclusion of essentializing the subject of such a process; therefore bearing in mind that there are no inherent traits in any assumed collective identity, women included, there remains a phenomenon that still needs an interpretation and an analysis: women have been leading the peace movement in Serbia.

A simple fact is that during the last two decades and to date in Serbia it is *women*, who as individuals and/or activists within a group raise and confront the public with issues of political responsibility, for the events of the recent past in Serbia, for the wars fought from 1991–1999, for the war crimes committed *in our name*; they do this as citizens of the state of Serbia. To name some (in alphabetical order):¹⁹ Sonja Biserko, the Director of the Helsinki Committee in Belgrade; Drinka Gojković, a translator, and a writer, who has started a Center for the Documentation of the Wars of 1991–1999. Nataša Kandić, Director and founder for Humanitarian Law Fund; Biljana Kovačević-Vučo, founder and Director of Yugoslav Lawyers Committee for Human Rights [YUCOM]; Borka Pavićević, who has created and sustained an alternative space in the “Center for Cultural Decontamination”²⁰; and Staša Zajović, feminist peace activist, co-founder of the Women in Black, and many many more. Women in Black should be especially singled out since they constituted themselves as a *women’s* activist group; consequently, they have a strong self-awareness of themselves, as women; in addition to this, for the most part, they also name themselves as feminists.²¹ This gives rise to another query as to further generalizations: What does a feminist position bring to bear on the pacifist, antinationalist activism?

There are women in Serbia who are peace-activists but who do not think of themselves as feminists; moreover, they do not perceive that there is any significance to their identity *as women* and never represented themselves as such. However, this self-perception of being *a woman* was reached as a result of continuous process of denigration and an attempt at public humiliation that was grounded in, among other things, the fact that they were women.²² And to paraphrase Hannah Arendt (who said that when attacked as a Jew she will defend herself as a Jew), when attacked as women, they did perceive of themselves as women: “... it is not unimportant that a few *women* in Serbia are

endlessly exposed to insults, threats and degradation precisely because they are trying to open up the process of reconciliation by way of establishing the truth and taking on responsibility.”²³ For their public opposition to the Serbian nationalist policy or propaganda they have often been attacked as “traitors to the national cause” and not only during the Milošević regime, but also after October 2000, by some members of the opposition to that regime, which reveals that for the amorphous mass of the political opposition to Milošević regime it still remains that it should stand the difficult test of raising the issues of political responsibility. The public scene in Serbia has at least two problems. First, it harbors a suspicion as to the presence of women on the public scene; and, second, it has not faced its recent past. If these two problems collapse into one, all those who oppose it are easily attacked with interchangeable accusations; so, peace activists are attacked as women (“ugly,” “frustrated,” and the like). Again, to fall back on Arendt—as she was named “a self-hating Jew”—these women are branded as “having problems with their gender and/or ethnic identities.”²⁴

The rise of nationalism in Serbia has fully revived a patriarchal system of values, which has existed and successfully survived beneath a thin layer of egalitarian ideology during the period of real socialism. Coupled with the fundamentalism of the Serbian Orthodox church, this framework, coherent in its anti modernism, set a specific stage for the presence of women on the public scene. Patriarchy has therefore proven to be complementary to nationalism and both go hand in hand with religious fundamentalism. Regarding this, Serbia is a case in point.

This is one of the reasons why engendering transitional justice and raising the issues of responsibility, as a political choice, should be based on secular assumptions. The argument is that only by, with and through secularization can the issues of responsibility be raised with theoretical seriousness and practical political effectiveness; that only by relying on a secular grounded judgment can *we* be the ones who judge at all. It is in this sense that the words of Goetz in Sartre’s play *The Devil and the Good Lord* should be understood: “You see this emptiness over our heads? That is God. (...) Silence is God. Absence is God. God is the loneliness of man. *There was no one but myself. I alone decided on the Evil; and I alone invented Good.*”²⁵

I understand non-secular thinking or a direct extension of a theological discourse to be present wherever there is a principle—metaphysi-

cal or otherwise—to which mankind is subordinate in such a way as to render it non responsible for the happenings in the world.

As religious faith, among else, does serve as a psychological support system and social amortization, there is always the danger of moving, or at least blurring the dividing line between the ‘limit situations’, as Jaspers would put it, which can and those that cannot be humanly dealt with; this has and in the future may continue to have devastating results for the issues of political responsibility. The fact that this has been brought up by the political agenda of modernity and especially Enlightenment, does not render the issues obsolete; quite the contrary, the evidence that it is still a requirement becomes even more convincing with time. For example, the separation of church and state is one of the practical political outcomes of recognizing the necessity of secularization in the course of building the citizenship of modernity; it is, according to some, an unquestionable result of modernity and Enlightenment projects. This however is an issue seriously challenged by the legal and educational authorities in Serbia who, after decades of secular educational system, decided to introduce courses in religion, prayers, priests and religious holidays into all elementary and high schools.

To conclude, in order to move forward with establishing the hitherto absent transitional justice in Serbia, the process of engendering political responsibility may take its cue from women activists who have been practicing it since the very beginning of the authoritarian regime and the times that have lead to and now demand justice for its victims.

Notes

- ¹ The recent events of a break up of the Serbian Radical Party (in September 2008) were by most analysts perceived as an obvious weakening of that Party; however, another interpretation may be that not only did Tomislav Nikolić sever his alliance with Vojislav Šešelj in order to save the ideology of (Serbian) nationalism, most of the (governing) political establishment in Serbia are actually aiding this process by supporting the image of Tomislav Nikolić as a serious albeit quite benign right wing politician and obliterating his contribution to the Serbian nationalist policy of wars, ethnic cleansing, also there is the fact that he has never renounced the project of Greater Serbia. (Sonja Biserko, "Tomislav Nikolić kao dr Dabić—Ruski Rulet" in *Elektronske novine*, Thursday, 9 September 2008).
- ² Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (New York: World Publishing Company, 1972), p. 459. Although the term transition and hence the concept and the issues of transitional justice could not have been raised by Arendt, it is her work that provides a theoretical framework not only for this text, but also for many authors who address the problem today.
- ³ These analyses of the 'recent past' were grounded in the texts already produced in the 1990s in Serbia and within the international intellectual community. To mention only some: Vladan Vasilijević, *Zločin i odgovornost. Ogled o međunarodnom krivičnom pravu i raspadu Jugoslavije* (Crime and Responsibility. An Essay on International Criminal Law and Break-up of Yugoslavia) (Belgrade: ITGP Prometej, 1995); Nebojša Popov, ed. *Srpska strana rata* (Belgrade: Republika, Novi Beograd: Vikom, Zrenjanjin: Građanska čitaonica, 1996); Nenad Dimitrijević, *Slučaj Jugoslavija* (The Case of Yugoslavia), (Belgrade: Reč, 2001) and numerous publications by Serbian NGOs, such as the Helsinki Citizen's Committee, Fund for Humanitarian Right, Women in Black, etc.
- ⁴ Nenad Dimitrijević, "Moralna odgovornost za kolektivni zločin" (Moral Responsibility for a Collective Crime), in Obrad Savić Ana Miljanić, (eds.) *Zajednica sećanja. Tranziciona pravda u istorijskoj perspektivi* (The Community of Memory: Transitional Justice in Historical Perspective), (Belgrade: Beogradski krug i Centar za kulturnu dekontaminaciju CZKD, 2006.) p. 33. For the similar claim of an analogy between Serbia in the 1990s and Germany from 1933–1945 see also Daša Duhaček "The Making of Political Responsibility: Hannah Arendt and the Case of Serbia" in J. Lukić, J. Regulska, and D. Zaviršek (eds.), *Women and Citizenship in Central and Eastern Europe* (Aldershot & Burlington: Ashgate, 2006.).
- ⁵ James Gow and Milena Michalski, "The Impact of War on Serbia" in Sabrina P. Ramet and Vjerran Pavlaković (eds.), *Serbia Since 1989: Politics and Society under Milošević and after* (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 2005), p. 154.
- ⁶ Eric Gordy, "Postwar Guilt and Responsibility in Serbia" in Ramet and Pavlaković (eds.), *Serbia Since 1989*, p. 185.

- ⁷ John Locke, *An Essay Concerning the True Original, Extent, and End of Civil Government*, Chapter VIII, § 119, in Peter Laslett, (ed.), *Locke, Two Treatises of Government* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), pp. 347–48.
- ⁸ Hannah Arendt, “Collective Responsibility” in Hannah Arendt, *Responsibility and Judgment*, (ed). Jerome Kohn (New York: Schocken Books, 2003).
- ⁹ Adrienne Rich, “Notes Toward a Politics of Location,” in *Blood Bread and Poetry*, (New York & London: WW. Norton and Company 1986), p. 211.
- ¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 212 (emphasis added).
- ¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 219.
- ¹² See Hannah Arendt “Collective Responsibility” in Hannah Arendt, *Responsibility and Judgment*, ed. Jerome Kohn (New York: Schocken Books, 2003); see also Daša Duhaček “The Making of Political Responsibility: Hannah Arendt and the Case of Serbia” in Lukić, Regulska, and Završek (eds.), *Women and Citizenship*.
- ¹³ This understanding of transitional justice is based on Nenad Dimitrijević, “Moralna odgovornost za kolektivni zločin” (Moral Responsibility for a Collective Crime), in Obrad Savić and Ana Miljanić, eds. *Zajednica sećanja. Tranziciona pravda u istorijskoj perspektivi* (The Community of Memory: Transitional Justice in Historical Perspective) (Belgrade: Beogradski krug i Centar za kulturnu dekontaminaciju CZKD, 2006) and also on Jon Elster, *Closing the Books—Transitional Justice in Historical Perspective*, (Cambridge (UK): Cambridge University Press, 2004). Also on transitional justice, Ruti Teitel, *Transitional Justice*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000); Stenli Coen, *Stanje poricanja. Znati za zlodela i patnje* (States of Denial: Knowing about Atrocities and Suffering) (Belgrade: Samizdat, 2003).
- ¹⁴ Immediately after World War II it was of course specified as de-nazification.
- ¹⁵ Similarly, to clarify complex issues of transitional processes in Serbia, James Gow and Milena Michalski, in their text “The Impact of War on Serbia” revert to questions of defining both “war” and “Serbia”; in Ramet and Pavlaković (eds.), *Serbia since 1989*.
- ¹⁶ The results of the survey were presented at a conference: “In Search of Truth and Responsibility: Toward a Democratic Future,” organized by Radio B92 in May 2001; they were published later in the article: Svetlana Logar and Srdjan Bogosavljević, “Vidjenje istine u Srbiji,” in *Reč*, 62 (2001). Regretfully, subsequent analyses in Serbia did not produce substantially different results of public opinion regarding the crimes committed during the wars 1991–1999; although there is recognition of the necessity—imposed by the international community—for cooperation with the Hague Tribunal. See, for example, Zagorka Golubović, Ivana Spasić and Djordje Pavićević (eds.), *Politika i svakodnevni život* (Bel-

grade: Institut za filozofiju i društvenu teoriju, 2003) or the more recent results of the Strategic Marketing and Media Research Institute, available at www.bgcentar.org.rs [last accessed on 23 May 2010].

- ¹⁷ Survey conducted by the Strategic Marketing and Media Research Institute (SMMRI) from April-June 2005 for the Belgrade Center for Human Rights (www.bgcentar.org.rs [last accessed on 23 May 2010]) and the Serbian Ministry of Human and Minority Rights; it was also presented at the seminar on *Transitional Justice* at the Center for Cultural Decontamination in June 2005.
- ¹⁸ Gordy, in his text "Postwar Guilt and Responsibility," pp. 166–191, based on the same surveys, drew similar conclusions.
- ¹⁹ For more information on the participation of women, see Daša Duhaček, "Gender Perspectives on Political Identities in Yugoslavia" in Rada Iveković and Julie Mostov, (eds.) *From Gender to Nation* (Ravenna: Longo Editore Ravenna, 2002).
- ²⁰ Staša Zajović and Sonja Biserko are among the women who were nominated in June 2005 for the Nobel Prize for Peace.
- ²¹ Some men joined particular peace manifestations and were accepted as members of the group, especially since this group organized many activities against drafting and also in favor of conscientious objection.
- ²² Slobodan Antić, a local political analyst has also named a group of contemporary historians in Serbia the "Women's School of National History" (*Ženska škola nacionalne istorije—ŽŠNI*); on the other hand, they perceive of themselves just as professionals with integrity, who happen to be women.
- ²³ Nataša Kandić, "Neprijatelj u Srbiji: otvorenost snaga i integritet nekoliko žena" (Enemy in Serbia: Openness, strength and integrity of few women), *Vreme* (Belgrade), no. 607 (22 August 2002), p. 62.
- ²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 63.
- ²⁵ Jean-Paul Sartre, "The Devil and the Good Lord," in *The Devil and the Good Lord and Two Other Plays*, translated from French by Kitty Black (New York: Vintage Books, 1960), p. 141. (emphasis added)

Part Five – Kosovo as Myth and as Politics

Dead Kings and National Myths: Why Myths of Founding and Martyrdom Are Important

*Sabrina P. Ramet**

The use of myths and religion in politics has a long history. Myths can establish a claim to dynastic legitimacy, to coveted territory, to glory, even to sainthood on the part of the central figure in a myth. Canonization is, in its own right, an especially powerful tool. There are, of course, diverse reasons for elevating someone to sainthood—among them: the desire to hold up for emulation a particularly pious and kind person, the wish to gratify the inhabitants of a certain country or region by honoring one of their own, the calculation that the creation of a national saint will help to promote the Christianization of a land in which pre-Christian beliefs still hold some sway, and even the endeavor to delegitimize a regime, as per the canonization of Tsar Nicholas II by the Russian Orthodox Church in 2000, which served to complete the delegitimizing of the Bolsheviks, now cast as slayers of a saint. Of particular interest to us here, however, is the conferral of sainthood upon a king, as a device to confer legitimacy upon that king's line or to sacralize the cause allegedly championed by that king.¹

Myths may evolve and the representation of a king may change over time; in this regard, Serbia is no exception. In fact, where Serbia is concerned, one can speak of a choice among a number of possible candidates for the role of central mythical hero: To begin with, one might think of Saint Sava (1175–1235), Serbia's first archbishop and one of the sons of Stefan Nemanja. Recognized as Serbia's most

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important saint, Sava established the Serbian Orthodox Church. His importance is emphasized by the dedication of Serbia's largest cathedral to his memory. But Saint Sava is ill-equipped to serve as the central figure in the national myth, since he was not a political figure.

A second candidate might be Tsar Dušan the Mighty (Stefan Uroš IV Dušan, 1308–1355). Dušan—who reigned as King of Serbia from 1331 to 1346 and thenceforth as emperor (tsar)—extended the borders of the state until it became one of Europe's larger states; he presented a legal code at congresses held in 1349 and 1354; he defeated Hungary on two separate occasions and annexed a large portion of Byzantine territory in southeastern Europe. He has often been described as the greatest Serbian ruler of all time. However, in 1354, hoping that Pope Innocent IV would appoint him to command a crusade against the Turks, Tsar Dušan sent a legation to Rome to offer, in exchange for the pope's endorsement, to recognize the pope as the successor of St. Peter and Vicar of Christ.² Insofar as this would have meant abandoning the Orthodox faith for the Catholic faith, Dušan was not the ideal choice to play the role of central figure in the national myth (although there is still some debate about his willingness to abandon Orthodoxy).

A third possibility would be Stefan Nemanja (1109–1199), who reigned as Grand Prince from 1166 until his abdication in 1196. He might seem to have been an ideal choice insofar as he both unified various small Serb states into a single state, thus ranking as a state-builder and achieved sainthood when, after his death, several miracles were attributed to his intercession. He also had good claim to the title of a defender of the Christian faith, insofar as he persecuted the Bogomils and burned their books, viewing them as heretics. Finally, acting at a time when Serbs were facing a choice between Western Christianity and Eastern Christianity, Stefan Nemanja opted for the latter. He eventually abdicated in favor of his second son, and, together with his wife, took monastic vows. Had the cult of Stefan Nemanja been promoted in Serbia in the 1980s and 1990s, that saint's association with state-building and piety might have lent itself to reinforcing forces for political moderation in Serbia.

To put the case in simple terms, what would be needed, at the time of national revival (in the nineteenth century) was a king-saint. Sava was a saint, but not a king. Dušan was a king, but not a saint. Stefan Nemanja was both a king and a saint, and, in this respect, had the most basic credentials for the role as historic hero. But there was an alternative king-saint available—Knez³ (Prince) Lazar Hrebeljanović (1329–

1389), the son of imperial chancellor Pribac Hrebeljanović. Lazar married Milica Nemanjić, the fourth cousin once removed of Tsar Dušan the Mighty, founded the monastery at Ravanica in 1380, and died on the field of battle in 1389. Lazar, it has been said, was visited by an angel on the eve of battle with the Ottoman army and was offered a choice between military victory, winning him an earthly kingdom, and defeat, winning him a martyr's crown and a heavenly kingdom. Lazar, according to a popular interpretation of the myth, chose to die a martyr, thus winning for all Serbs a special status as a heavenly people. Although the way in which the Battle of Kosovo has been remembered and the use made of the myth of 'Tsar' Lazar (as he is commonly called) have changed over the centuries, this myth was more readily adaptable than other myths to the Serbian national project associated with Slobodan Milošević (1941–2006). Accordingly, it was Lazar who was touted in the Milošević era as the great Serbian king-saint and national martyr, Lazar whose bones were carried around the towns and villages of Serbia in 1989 in a macabre summoning of the ghosts of the Field of the Blackbirds, and Lazar, whose portrait was carried aloft, next to portraits of Milošević in gatherings in Serbian communities. The epic battle of 28 June 1389 (adjusted for the current Gregorian calendar; 15 June 1389 according to the Julian calendar then in use) was solemnly commemorated on its 600th anniversary in 1989 and reenacted in the course of the 1990s, in an effort to persuade Serbs to see the present battles through the lenses of the past, while, at the height of the struggle in Bosnia-Herzegovina, at a time when Serbian sovereignty in Kosovo had not yet been seriously challenged, Serbs became fond of repeating the slogan, "We shall lose our life but we shall not give up Kosovo."⁴

The fact that Lazar was elevated to mythic-hero status, rather than Stefan Nemanja, was symptomatic of the processes underway in Serbia, and worked to reinforce other vehicles of socialization. The loss of Kosovo in 1389 could be avenged; and Lazar the saint conveyed a heavenly glow to the Serbian national project. Stefan Nemanja, although he might be recognized as having been an important figure in Serbian history or even, if one wishes, a great king, would not have served so well to rally Serbs for war. The coincidence that the 600th anniversary of the Battle of Kosovo fell early in Milošević's term of office imparted additional force to that particular myth.

Myths of Founding, Myths of Martyrdom

In considering national myths, one must differentiate between myths of founding and myths of martyrdom. Myths of founding tell about the founding of the state and typically, though not always, include a notion of entitlement to certain lands. The mythologization of King Stephen of Hungary (c. 975–1038), for example, although originally intended to serve for dynastic legitimation, would also later serve to establish an entitlement of Hungary to the so-called Lands of the Crown of St. Stephen. Myths of martyrdom, by contrast, tell of the heroic sacrifice of a great figure in history—usually in a battle for the country. Myths of martyrdom also involve entitlement, although not to land as such. The martyrdom of Olav the Holy (995–1030) at the Battle of Stiklestad in 1030 may be said to have entitled the Norwegian nation to respect, while the martyrdom of Tsar Lazar, the Serbian prince, on the Field of the Blackbirds in 1389, as already noted, is said to have entitled Serbs to a “heavenly kingdom,” although the precise expectations to be associated with that latter entitlement are not always spelled out. Although every nation has a number of national myths, I suggest that, in the case of European societies, there is usually a dominant national myth involving a medieval king (although, in France, the dominant national myth involves the 15th-century warrior-saint, Joan of Arc), and that it makes a difference for the content of each nation’s nationalism and sense of national purpose whether that dominant myth is a myth of founding or a myth of martyrdom.

In the following chapter, I shall examine four cases—those of Hungary, England, Norway, and Serbia—arguing that the dominant national myth in the case of Hungary is a myth of founding, while the dominant national myths in the cases of Norway and Serbia are myths of martyrdom; in England, by contrast, the myth of King Arthur is associated by legend with chivalry, piety, and the quest for the Holy Grail. The kings who figure in the national myths of Norway and Hungary lived in the eleventh century, while the Serbian tsar Lazar lived in the fourteenth century; King Arthur—and I shall make the case that he did exist—lived and reigned in the sixth century. Three of the four—all except King Arthur—were later canonized. All of them are included in the schoolbooks in use in their respective countries. King Arthur will be contrasted with William the Conqueror, whose victory in the Battle of Hastings in 1066 is often taken as marking the founding of a “new” English state.

Myths of founding and virtue

For purposes of legitimation, a royal founder should be a man of God —pious, dedicated to the Church, and determined, where necessary, to stamp out “pagan” faiths. Stephen of Hungary (reigned 1000/1001–1038) was the son of Prince Géza, who reigned from 972 to 997, and Adelaide, a Christian princess of Polish extraction. Although the Christianization of Hungary and the construction of central state power both began under Géza, it is Stephen who has been generally credited with putting the Christian Church on a firm foundation in Hungary and accorded the title of founder of the Hungarian state.⁵ Originally known as Vaik, he was given the Christian name István (Stephen) at the time he was baptized (at age 10). After the death of his father, it took Stephen about three years to quell the rebellion of nobles led by his relative and rival Koppány, Prince of Somogy. After achieving victory in this struggle, Stephen was crowned King of Hungary in either 1000 or 1001 —sources differ on the exact year of his coronation. According to legend, Pope Sylvester II sent a “holy crown” to Stephen, although this legend was called into question by research conducted by the Hungarian Academy of Sciences more than a century ago.⁶ But Stephen’s claim to the title of founder rests not only on his coronation but, more particularly, on the fact that it was at that time that Hungary first achieved the boundaries which came to be treated as sacrosanct by Hungarians for centuries thereafter (“the Lands of the Crown of St. Stephen”) as well as on Stephen’s determination to uproot pre-Christian beliefs and practices, a determination backed by force. It was King Stephen who organized the Church in Hungary, setting up the archdiocese of Gran and that of Kalocsa; and he founded the monastery of Saints Peter and Paul in Buda, and had churches built in order to promote the spread of Christianity among his people. He also issued edicts mandating severe punishment for blasphemy, among other offenses, and forbade Christians to marry non-Christians.⁷ He often made donations from the royal treasury to help pilgrims, widows, and orphans, and to support monasteries abroad. Even in marriage he came across as saintly, choosing to marry Gisela, a woman who had originally thought of becoming a nun and who had been educated by St. Wolfgang.⁸

Thietmar, bishop of Merseburg, left a written chronicle of his age, and, while his portraits of most kings, whether of Hungary or Bohemia or elsewhere, show them as barbarian and sanguinary, he praised King Stephen for the mercy he showed toward those whom he had defeated

in battle, although one may qualify that by pointing out that he showed mercy only toward Christians, not toward those he considered idolatrous. Significantly, when German scribes were brought to Stephen's court, they were instructed to refer to his majesty as "Stephen the Pious" rather than using such other epithets preferred by other kings, such as "the invincible" or "the most glorious" or "the magnificent."⁹ This is not to say that the king was indulgent toward those disloyal to him. When his son, Vazul, tried to organize a rebellion against him, Stephen had him blinded. But the widespread tales of his active promotion of Christian charity, even disbursing alms to the poor himself (in disguise) contributed to fashioning a positive image of the king. Shortly after his death, there were reports of people being miraculously healed of various afflictions at his tomb; in 1083, he was canonized by the Vatican and his right hand is maintained as a relic, resting in the Saint Stephen Cathedral in Budapest. His triple role as state-builder, warrior (winning every war he fought), and defender of the Christian faith, together with his reputation for piety, assure this sainted king the seat of honor in the pantheon of Hungarian heroes. As Gábor Klaniczay has noted, Stephen was the first king to achieve sainthood by some means other than martyrdom.¹⁰

For the English (and here I do not include the Scots or the Welsh), William the Conqueror provokes variously ambivalence or controversy. When William, Duke of Normandy came to England at the head of an army of between 7,000 and 12,000 men, he claimed to be the legitimate heir of Edward the Confessor, who had reigned from 1042 until 5 January 1066. Edward, canonized in 1161 and regarded as the patron saint of England until 1348, died without issue, and there were immediately three contenders for the throne: Harold Godwinson, crowned as King of England; King Harald III of Norway; and Duke William of Normandy, who noted that he was related to Edward through the latter's mother, Emma of Normandy. Both Harald of Norway and William of Normandy invaded England to press their claims. The former sent a force into the north of England, but Harold was able to bring an effective force to Stamford Bridge, where his forces crushed the Viking invaders. But William's forces landed at Pevensey in the south three days later. Harold rushed his remaining forces southward to meet William at Hastings on 14 October 1066, and initially seemed to be prevailing. But Harold was killed on the field of battle, possibly by an arrow shot into his eye, and with that Saxon resistance collapsed.

Although what followed has come down as “the Norman conquest of England,” at the time William’s claim to the throne was seen as every bit as good as Harold’s. Where Harold claimed that, on his death bed, Edward had designated him, rather than William, as his chosen successor, William claimed that Edward had promised the throne to him and that Harold had even sworn an oath to support William as the future king of England during a sojourn in Normandy in 1064. Be that as it may, there was no popular resistance to William. On the contrary, the various earls, thegns, bishops, sheriffs, and other notables were quick to proclaim their loyalty to the new claimant to the throne, hoping thereby to assure their retention of the lands and privileges they had enjoyed. This proved to be naïve, however, when, on the pretext that all those who had sworn loyalty to Harold had forfeited all right to their possessions, the Normans confiscated Saxon estates, taking them for themselves.¹¹ Had William displayed the qualities of mercy and charity so well exemplified by King Stephen of Hungary, he might well have come to embody the spirit of England in myth and status. But, when two earls in the north raised the banner of rebellion, William’s vengeance was so cruel, leaving not a single house standing or anyone alive, that his reign easily came to be characterized as “the Norman yoke,” much as Serbs would characterize the Ottoman period in some of their schoolbooks as “slavery under the Turks.”

Six centuries later, during the English Civil War, both royalists and parliamentarians conjured up an idealized picture of Anglo-Saxon England, but differed over what to make of William’s assumption of the English throne. The parliamentarians adhered to a theory of continuity, denying that the Norman arrival could be characterized as conquest, and claiming that English laws and customs had remained intact after William became king. The royalists by contrast noted that William had used force both to seize the throne and to maintain himself in power and claimed that Norman customs and institutions had displaced Anglo-Saxon ones.¹² But the image of William which has come down to us is that captured by a contemporary chronicler:

*He had castles built
And poor men hard oppressed.
The King was so very stark,
And deprived his underlings of many a mark
Of gold and more hundreds of pounds of silver,
That he took by weight and with great injustice*

*From his people with little need for such a deed.
 Into avarice did he fall,
 And loved greediness above all.*¹³

His virtue thus denied and the legitimacy of his succession contested, William I might be considered the founder of the (new) English state in some sense, but it would be difficult at best to imagine the memory of his reign being recalled either to inspire the English or to mobilize them. For the purpose of inspiration, another king had to be found.

That king was King Arthur, a legendary figure whose existence has been disputed, but who may have led the Celts in an effort to stave off invading Angles and Saxons in the late fifth and early sixth centuries. As the Anglo-Saxons advanced, the Celts were pushed back into Cornwall and Wales. The former called their realm England, while the Celts driven back into the region today known as Wales were called “Welsh” (from “weala” meaning foreigners) by the Anglo-Saxons. These Celts called themselves “Cymry” (fellow countrymen) and their country “Cymru.” This has a bearing insofar as the earliest references to King Arthur occur not in English chronicles but in Welsh ones.¹⁴ Geoffrey of Monmouth (c. 1100–c. 1155), a Welsh clergyman, drew upon earlier traditions, especially upon the Venerable Bede’s *Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum* and Gildas’s sixth century *De Excidio Britanniae*, to fashion his own *History of the Britons* (written around 1133–1135), in which he reworked earlier stories about the wizard Myrddin (whom he recast as Merlin) and King Arthur.

In the following centuries, it was the French who seemed to be the most interested in the Arthurian legends. The French poet Maistre Wace retold the story of Arthur in 1155, adding the Round Table; Chrétien de Troyes, another French writer, penned five stories about the king between 1160 and 1180, developing the theme of chivalry; and Robert de Boron (also spelled Bouron), a Burgundian knight and French poet of the late 12th and early 13th century, added the notion that King Arthur and his knights had been on a quest for the Holy Grail.¹⁵ Finally, in the late fifteenth century, Sir Thomas Malory gave the Arthurian legend its quintessential expression in his book, *Le Morte D’Arthur*, published by William Caxton in 1485. Something of the potency of this epic is captured in the following extract:

*..Merlin made the Round Table in tokening of roundness
 of the world, for by the Round Table*

*is the world signified by right,
 for all the world, Christian and heathen,
 repair unto the Round Table;
 and when they are chosen
 to be of the fellowship of the Round Table
 they think them[selves] more blessed and more in worship
 than if they had gotten half the world...
 When Merlin had ordained the Round Table
 he said, by them which should be fellows of the Round Table
 the truth of the Sangreal should be well known.
 And men asked him how men might know them
 that should best do and to achieve the Sangreal?
 Then he said there should be three white bulls that should
 achieve it,
 and the two should be maidens, and the third should be chaste.
 And that one of the three should pass his father
 as much as the lion passeth the leopard, both of strength
 and hardiness.¹⁶*

But King Arthur had taken hold of the imagination of the English long before Sir Thomas Malory's saga. Indeed, by the early 19th century there had appeared references to the legend that the king lay sleeping in a cave somewhere in Britain, to be awakened at a time of national crisis.¹⁷ In some versions, all of the king's knights were also sleeping in the same cave, ready to reveal themselves in Britain's hour of need. The original Arthur was surely a real king. The legend of St. Cadocus describes King Arthur as a crude and rough-hewn border chieftain, quite unlike the Arthur of legend.¹⁸ This alternative portrait of the Celtic king obviously gives Arthur no special credit, but it may be closer to the historical Arthur. Then there is the matter of Arthur's tomb, said to be located at Glastonbury Abbey, which in the 500s had been a Celtic Christian shrine – a fit place to bury a Celtic king.¹⁹ Certainly, Mary Williams, a scholar specializing in Arthuriana, concluded that King Arthur was a real person and pointed to several Arthurs of royal extraction living in the British isles at the time the Arthur of legend was supposed to have lived, any one of whom may have been "King Arthur."²⁰ But the very fact that his existence has been disputed arguably lends special potency to the legend of Arthur who is, thus, shrouded in mystery and who, if we choose to consider him fictional (as some authors do), could be anything we want him to be.

In the early twelfth century, Cornishmen and Welsh, descendants of the Celts, still nurtured the belief and hope that Arthur would return, refusing to believe that he had actually died more than half a millennium earlier.²¹ Later, the legend became part of English lore, so that, in 1278, King Edward I (reigned 1272–1307) ordered the ceremonial reburial of the exhumed last remains of, it was said, King Arthur at the high altar of Glastonbury Abbey. As Kenneth Knight notes, “there is little doubt that Edward’s action was tinged with dynastic and political overtones.”²² An Order of the Knights of the Round Table had also come into existence by the fourteenth century—though said to be “ancient”—and in 1349 King Edward III (reigned 1327–1377) transferred the Order to Windsor Castle, redesignating it the Most Noble Order of the Garter. Still later, in the reign of Elizabeth I (reigned 1558–1603), a society of archers existed, calling themselves “the Knights of the Round Table.” Legends of Arthur proliferated over the centuries, in one version having him killing an evil Black Witch and, in another, casting him as a giant.

But to return to the twelfth century, King Henry I (reigned 1100–1135), son of William the Conqueror, started his reign by having to fight wars to retain control of his realm. In this situation, the king stood in need of a heroic ancestor, someone whose glory could be compared, say, to that of Charlemagne. It was the genius of Geoffrey of Monmouth to recognize how to meet this need, as Gordon Hall Gerould has pointed out. Indeed, the composition of Geoffrey’s *History* was consciously designed to demonstrate that King Arthur was not only a greater king than Charlemagne but also more ancient (thus reinforcing his credentials as a worthy ancestor).²³ And while he was not canonized, Arthur’s alleged commitment to the virtues of chivalry and his reputed quest for the Holy Grail provided adequate compensation.

Myths of martyrdom—Norway

An alternative to myths of founding is myths of martyrdom, in which the claim to sainthood—and thus also to political legitimacy—is often more firmly established. The national martyr dies for the sake of the nation and, as such, symbolizes the nation. Within this broad parameter, however, there is room for considerable variation. Jan Hus (1370–1415) of Bohemia, a religious reformer but no king, was burned at the stake on charges of heresy but, in death, inspired the religio-patriotic Taborites who saw themselves as fighting for God; today, Hus, though

never canonized, is considered something like a national saint among Czechs. Rodrigo Diaz de Vivar (1040–1099), better known as “El Cid,” was a Castilian nobleman and military leader who fought the Moors in Spain and eventually carved out his own kingdom; although he died of natural causes, legend has it that, after his death, his body was strapped onto his horse and sent into battle, so that El Cid won his final battle while actually dead and thereby winning him an honorary, if curious, place among martyrs for the nation. Neither Jan Hus nor El Cid was canonized, but Joan of Arc (1412–1431), an illiterate farmer’s daughter who led the French army to victory against the English only to be captured in 1430 and burned at the stake by the English on trumped up charges of heresy, was accorded this honor in 1920.

Among those medieval rulers remembered as martyrs are King Olav the Holy of Norway and Prince Lazar of Serbia—both of them canonized. Both died in battle in a struggle over land. Both are credited with posthumous miracles. Both are still remembered today in their respective nations and honored as national heroes. But where the memory of Lazar today evokes, if anything, a sense of national tragedy and, in the context of Kosovo’s recently received independence, also a bitter sense of *déjà vu*, Olav den Hellige (Olav the Holy) is remembered by ordinary Norwegians with reverence, as having completed the process of the Christianization of their country.

Even so, historical and scholarly accounts of Olav differ widely. As Father Olav Müller notes, for some authors Olav is “a brutal psychopath,” but for others, “a bloodless saint like an angel.”²⁴ The historical Olav Haraldsson was born in approximately 990 and claimed to be a descendant of Harald Hårfagre (Harald the Fair-haired), who had died in 933. At a young age—indeed, perhaps when he was no older than 12—he assembled a Viking crew and set out on a voyage of pillage and plunder. Although Olav Tryggvason, who reigned as King of Denmark and part of southern Norway from 995 to 1000, had begun the forcible Christianization of Norway, polytheism still had a strong presence in the country at the beginning of the eleventh century. Olav Haraldsson himself was born into the ancient religion and, in his day, members of royal families generally claimed to be descended from the gods Frøy and/or Odin. According to Vera Henriksen, insofar as Olav laid claim to territory in Norway, “his...claim to kingship must, in the eyes of his contemporaries, have been founded on his descendancy from the god Frøy.”²⁵ Like other kings in medieval times (such as King Arthur, at least according to legend), Olav possessed a very special

sword which, in his case, was a symbol of his descent from the gods; the sword was regarded as possessing supernatural powers and thereby endowing the person who wielded it with the assurance of victory in battle. Olav and his Vikings raided villages along the English coast for three years and, in 1009, attacked London, where they tore down London Bridge. Two years later, he took part in the sack of Canterbury; the English king, Ethelred, agreed to pay a ransom so that Olav and his companions would leave his country in peace. With the ransom in their hold, Olav's Vikings sailed to Normandy, where Olav offered his services to Duke Richard II. During the two years that he was in Normandy, Olav heard tales of the achievements of Carolus Magnus (Charlemagne), who had ruled as King of the Franks from 768 until his death in 814; Olav was especially interested in how the Frankish king had built up his empire. It was also in that period that Olav was baptized a Christian.

Returning to Norway in 1015, Olav succeeded within a short time in being accepted as king in most of southeastern Norway. Winning a naval battle in the spring of 1016, he added the southwest and the Oslo fjord area to his kingdom; and in summer 1016, he came to Trondheim where he was accepted as king as well.²⁶ In the following months, he succeeded in establishing his rule over the entire country, and, fired by his new faith, decided to impose Christianity on his people. This was done at the sword point.²⁷ He also abolished laws inconsistent with Christian teaching, which he made the foundation for a new legal system. The changes to the laws were unpopular with both the common people and the local nobles, whose status was adversely affected, and Olav assigned *årlmenn* (men from his royal guard) to keep watch over the local chiefs. Meanwhile, King Knut of Denmark and England (reigned in England, 1016–1035, and in Denmark, 1018–1035)—known in English history as King Canute the Great—took note of the growing discontent among Norwegians and sent gifts of treasure to the local chiefs in Norway, in hopes of winning their allegiance. He also promised them to restore their old privileges if they accepted him as their monarch. Knut's overtures were successful, and, when he arrived in Norway in 1028 with a large fleet, Olav had to flee the country. He took refuge in Kiev, as the guest of his brother-in-law, Grand Duke Jaroslav. After securing control in Norway, Knut returned to England, leaving Håkon Jarl to govern as his viceroy.

In 1029, Håkon Jarl drowned and, upon hearing the news, Olav decided to return to Norway in an attempt to regain his throne. According to

Snorri Sturloson (1178–1241), the Icelandic mythographer and poet, Olav assembled a force of about 3,600 men for this venture, augmenting this force en route until he led an army of 7,000 men. At Stikestad on 29 July 1030, he was met by forces commanded by Hårek from Tjøtta, Tore Hund from Bjarkøy, and Kalf Arnason, who had previously served under Olav's command. Olav received three severe blows to the head and died on the field of battle; his army lost the battle, and his body was removed and buried secretly in Trondheim.

Legends quickly grew about Olav. According to the *Saga of Legends*, his body rose out of the ground just one year and five days after it had been buried, and had to be reinterred. His body rose a second time nine nights later. At this point—so the story goes—Bishop Grimkjell and King Svein (Knut's son and the vassal king of Norway, 1030–1035) ordered that a strand of hair be plucked from his beard so that it might be burned. But when the hair was placed in consecrated fire, it did not burn. Soon thereafter, there were reports of miracles taking place at his tomb.²⁸ The story also began to circulate that, on the eve of the Battle of Stiklestad, Olav had entrusted a large sum of money to a freeman, instructing him to give it “to the churches, and some to the priests, and some to the poor, and you shall give it for the souls of those who fall in battle and [also for] those who fight against us.”²⁹ It was also told that, just prior to the battle, Olav had had a dream in which he had seen a ladder leading up to heaven and had climbed up the ladder, where he could see heaven before his eyes. When he told his countryman Finn Arneson of the dream, Finn told the king that this was a bad omen, signifying that the king would die in battle.³⁰ Rather than being disheartened at this prospect, Olav saw this as the fruit of his “yearning for the crown of martyrdom,” as the *Passio Olavi*, a medieval text from Norway written in Latin, records.³¹ Moreover, although he took his pagan sword with him into battle, upon being wounded above the left knee, Olav hurled the sword far away—according to Snorri's account—thus giving up the fight and giving his soul up to God. Henriksen comments cautiously, “If that was so—and I am certainly not declaring that it definitely was—then Olav's throwing away of Olav Geirstad-alv's sword signified his ultimate conversion and his final surrender to the God of Christianity. Furthermore, in the eyes of the Church that one act could have vindicated him of his former violence and harshness”—some of which was, in any event, committed in order to propagate the Christian faith.³² This idealized picture of Olav might be captured in the following lines:

*In one thousand thirty in the year of Our Lord
 As Olav, King, faced the Danish horde
 He dreamt he stood at Heaven's door,
 Thus is it written in the ancient lore.
 He sensed that this told of his fate,
 How could he live if Heaven's gate
 Was already opening up to him?
 But he rejoiced, he was not grim.
 A martyr's crown was beckoning,
 On the eve of military reckoning.
 Brave in heart, of noble mind,
 He was the best among his kind.
 He led his troops into the fray,
 But fell in battle on that day.
 Struck by axe above the knee,
 He hurled his magic sword against a tree,
 And shouted to God at the top of his voice,
 "Take me, Lord, I do rejoice
 Even as I take my last breath,
 Knowing that it is through death,
 That immortality comes to me.
 I surrender now my soul to Thee."
 And thus do we recall this kingly saint,
 Whose soul was free of stain or taint.³³*

The cult of the new saint spread across Europe, gaining an early foothold in England, where, in the early years, the cult of St. Olav was reflected in the dedication of a number of churches to his memory.³⁴ From around 1050 until 1537, when the Reformation came to Norway, pilgrims came to Trondheim from all over Europe. For those making the journey, the pilgrimage had sacerdotal significance, even if no miraculous cures resulted. For the Church, the growing myth of St. Olav made a significant contribution to strengthening Christianity among the Norwegians. For the state, the legend strengthened the hand of future kings of Norway.³⁵ St. Olav, described as a combination of apostle and martyr, came to be regarded as the national saint of Norway. In a recent hagiographic essay, we find the following judgment passed on the dead king:

The Battle of Stiklestad must have appeared as the definitive downfall of a failed king. However, the tables were turned: The two main

objectives Olav had been fighting for, uniting and christening Norway, gained their final victory through his death as a martyr...Olav became a saint deeply loved by the people because he appealed to more or less all groups. He was the champion of peasants and sailors, the patron saint of traveling merchants and city dwellers, defender of the monarchy, and the protector of the needy. He was a hero after the fashion of the times, a knight of the faith as if springing from the imagery of the stories of the knights.³⁶

Myths of martyrdom—Serbia

The preceding discussion is quite sufficient to show that the mythologization of a dead king is by no means unique to Serbia. Moreover, in the case of Norway, we have a king-saint who, like Lazar, is said to have had a dream on the eve of battle in which he was given a vision of heaven, to have freely chosen martyrdom, to have died on the field of battle, and to have in some sense achieved “victory” through defeat in battle. Yet, in spite of these striking parallels, the uses to which the legend of Prince Lazar and the Battle of Kosovo have ended up being put in Serbia are quite different from the uses made of the legend of King Olav and the Battle of Stiklestad.

The armies which met on the Field of the Blackbirds on 28 June 1389 were multiethnic. Sultan Murad I (reigned 1359–1389), nicknamed Hüdavendigar or “the God-like One,” commanded a force which included Greeks, Bulgarians, and Albanians. Prince Lazar’s army consisted of Serbs, Croats, Albanians, and Bulgarians, among others.³⁷ Murad’s purpose in striking into Serbia was to bring that state under his scepter, initially as a vassal state and later as a fully incorporated province of the Ottoman empire. Lazar’s army was seriously outnumbered. According to the most reliable accounts, Murad’s army numbered about 27–30,000 troops, while Lazar’s numbered only 15–20,000.³⁸ There are no eye-witness accounts, but a Serbian ex-Janissary, writing in the 1490s, attributed the Serbian defeat to the fact that some Serbian nobles “had watched the battle ‘through their fingers’.”³⁹ In 1601, a Ragusan monk, Mavro Orbini, published a work of history in which he named Vuk Branković, one of Lazar’s sons-in-law, as a traitor, but the author seems to have mixed up Vuk Branković with Đurađ Branković, Vuk’s son, who informed the sultan of that time of the movements of troops commanded by the Transylvanian nobleman János Hunyadi on the eve of the second Battle of Kosovo (1448). The outcome of the battle of 1389 was ambiguous, however.

Both Lazar and Murad died on the battlefield, and both armies withdrew. One of the earliest reports of the battle, in a letter sent by King Tvrtko of Bosnia (who had not actually been in Kosovo himself⁴⁰) to the Senate of the Dalmatian city of Trogir on 1 August 1389, claimed that the Christian army had won a great victory over the Ottomans; the death of the sultan at the hands of a Christian assassin gave substance to this representation.⁴¹

Just as the Arthurian legend was initially developed above all by Frenchmen and much as the cult of Olav found some of its earliest advocates in England, so too was the legend of the Battle of Kosovo initially

...cultivated primarily among Catholic intellectuals in the Venetian empire (including Catholic Slavs on the Adriatic coast) and in a western Balkan form of epic poetry known as *bugarštica*. To be sure, the transmitting population included Serb ancestors in the form of Orthodox Christians on the anti-Ottoman military frontier, but the story clearly was not particular to this population, which for the most part did not even identify itself as Serb until well into the nineteenth century. More important, while writers seized upon the story as a means to manifest hostility toward the Turkish invaders, there was, for the most part, nothing particularly Serbian in their focus.⁴²

Moreover, and ironically, in Ottoman Serbia—according to Miodrag Popović—the local population did not give the legend of the Battle of Kosovo an interpretation unfavorable or hostile to the Ottoman Turks. On the contrary, Serbia's culture in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was "Turkophilic," with Serbs enjoying religious autonomy and freedom of worship, and facing a lighter burden of feudal duties than their counterparts elsewhere in Europe.⁴³

Between 1841 and 1862, Vuk Stefanović Karadžić (1787–1864), the Serb orthographer and language reformer, published four volumes of *Serbian National Songs*, among which a few treat of Kosovo. In one of these we find Sultan Murad, already dying from his wounds, giving the following command to his viziers and other aides:

*Turks, brothers, lale [lower court officials] and vezirs,
I die, and the empire falls to you!
So that your empire may endure long,
Do not be cruel to the flock,
But be very good to the flock.*

*Let the head tax be 15 dinars;
 Even let it be 30 dinars.
 But do not levy fines or special taxes.
 Do not impose grief upon the flock.
 Do not touch their church;
 Neither its law nor its observation.
 Do not take revenge upon the flock,
 Just because Miloš has cut me.
 That was military fortune...
 You must not chase the flock away
 Into the forests so that they will abhor you,
 But watch over the flock as if they were your own sons;
 In that way the empire will last you long.
 But if you begin to oppress the flock,
 You will then lose the empire.⁴⁴*

In this verse, the sultan is recalled as a charitable and wise ruler, who wishes the future Serbian subjects of the Ottoman empire well. For Serbs reading this poem, the Battle of Kosovo emerges not as a crime to be avenged but as the moment when the sultan offered a pledge, albeit in his last breath, to which Serbs could hold his heirs. Moreover, in Karadžić's version, the sultan proposes that his assassin, Miloš Kobilić, be buried next to him; Kobilić then protests that he is unworthy to be buried next to an emperor and proposes rather that sultan and prince be buried side by side, recognizing their equality, and that he himself be buried at their feet. According to Karadžić, the sultan granted his assassin this request.

In another poem, Karadžić has the prophet Elijah visit Prince Lazar on the eve of battle and offer him a choice between a heavenly kingdom and an earthly one.⁴⁵ In an alternate version of the story, it is an angel who visits Lazar in a dream, but in both versions Lazar chooses to die a martyr's death, much as King Olav is said to have done, and in this way secured a heavenly kingdom for himself and for Serbia. In an article published in 2001, Alexander Greenawalt suggests that what has become the traditional interpretation of this episode may be at variance with the intentions of those who first circulated the legend of the heavenly vision and certainly with Vuk Karadžić's intentions. Greenawalt stresses that Lazar's choice of a heavenly kingdom cannot be seen as a myth of founding of a Serbian state but rather lends itself to legitimating Ottoman sovereignty in Serbia, recognizing that, in

Ottoman-era Serbia, the “heavenly kingdom”—the Serbian Orthodox Church—enjoyed considerable autonomy and freedom.⁴⁶

I have already mentioned King Tvrtko’s early interpretation of the battle as a victory for Christendom. In the period immediately following the death of the prince and his widow’s acceptance of a vassal relationship with Istanbul the following year, Serbs were overcome with despair. Thomas Emmert speculates that it was in hopes of combating this mood and in order to instill hope in Serbs that monastic figures now took up the pen, eulogizing the fallen prince. One of the best known poems from this period is Patriarch Danilo III’s *Slovo o Knezu Lazaru*, [A Speech about Prince Lazar] composed in 1392. In Danilo’s rendition, the prince assembled his forces before leading them into battle, and offered them these words of encouragement:

*You, o comrades and brothers, lords and nobles, soldiers and vojvodas—great and small. You yourselves are witnesses and observers of that great goodness God has given us in this life....But if the sword, if wounds, or if the darkness of death comes to us, we accept it sweetly for Christ and for the godliness of the homeland. It is better to die in battle than to live in shame. Better it is for us to accept death from the sword in battle than to offer our shoulders to the enemy. We have lived a long time for the world; in the end we seek to accept the martyr’s struggle and to live forever in heaven. We call ourselves Christian soldiers, martyrs for godliness to be recorded in the book of life.*⁴⁷

In the anonymous *Pohvalno slovo knezu Lazaru* [A Eulogy for Prince Lazar], the fallen prince is compared to Christ himself, a comparison hinted in Adam Stefanović’s painting, “The Feast of the Prince Lazar,” dating from the 1870s. In this painting, Lazar and his lords are arrayed around the supper table in a pattern unmistakably reminiscent of Christ’s Last Supper, with a shaft of light illuminating Lazar as if in a divine glow, while leaving most of the rest of his entourage in the shadows.⁴⁸ The comparison with Christ is also implicit in the poem, “The Finding of Prince Lazar’s Head,” which records that, after Lazar was beheaded in battle, his head was dropped into a well; forty years passed before someone found the head, at which point Lazar’s headless body also appeared, the head miraculously joined the head, and Lazar reappeared whole in body as he had been before death. Commenting on this poem, Z. D. Zimmerman suggested that the decapitation of Lazar served as a metaphor for the decapitation of Serbia, with the head symbolizing the spirit of the nation and the body symbolizing the nation itself; on this



Unbekannter Autor — Der hl. Fürst Lazar, Holzschnitt vom Ende des 17. oder Beginn des 18. Jh.

Figure 1. Prince-Saint Lazar. Woodcut from the end of the seventeenth or beginning of the eighteenth century

Source: Dinko Davidov, "Der Kult des Heiligen Fürsten Lazar und seine Gestalt in der Serbischen Graphik des XVIII. Jahrhunderts," in Veselin Đuretić (ed.), *Kosovska bitka 1389. godine i njene posledice* (Belgrade: Balkanološki institut SANU, 1991), p. 307. Reprinted by permission of the Institute of Balkan Studies, Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, Belgrade.

interpretation, the resurrection of Lazar brought about by the reunification of head and body symbolizes the anticipated resurrection of the Serbian nation.⁴⁹

The decapitation of Prince Lazar was also reflected in a stylized fashion in many icons dating from the end of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In one wood-cut by an anonymous artist (Figure 1), for example, Prince Lazar has his head on his shoulders but is carrying a second head in his left hand; in his right hand he carries a cross as a symbol of his dedication to the faith. This stylized treatment is repeated in a graphic portrait by Hristofor Žefarović dating from 1741 (Figure 2) except that, in this second portrait, he carries both a cross and a scepter in his right hand. In both depictions, there are haloes behind both the head on his shoulders and the head he carries.⁵⁰ As for the “two heads”—Prince Lazar is shown intact, as if resurrected from the dead; the head he carries is, thus, only a remnant of the earthly body he left behind in choosing the heavenly kingdom and eternal life.

The decapitation is treated rather differently in a panegyric song, dating from the sixteenth century, which claimed that, while Lazar’s body remained in the ground, his head was seen floating by itself over the Field of the Blackbirds.⁵¹ As with other king-saints, amazing stories were connected with his earthly remains, which were said to possess miraculous powers. It was also claimed that Prince Lazar’s bones, said to have been preserved in a monastery at Ravanica, were in some sense still alive or, in an alternative account, that God had preserved Lazar’s last remains from decay, in a sure sign of his sainthood.⁵² Again, as with other king-saints, the dead prince was portrayed in early writings as a pious man of God. Thus, in *Prološko žitije kneza Lazara* (An Abbreviated Biography of Prince Lazar), penned by an anonymous author and said to be the oldest tract devoted to Lazar, the prince is described as:

*The most pious scion
Of the pious root.
I speak of your chosen one
The noble and gentle Lazar
O Christ.
He showed himself an example of zeal
And fought the good fight
For the godliness of his land.*⁵³



Hristifor Žefarović, Der hl. Fürst Lazar, Stematographie, Wien 1741

Figure 2. Prince-Saint Lazar. Graphic portrait by Hristofor Žefarović, 1741

Source: Dinko Davidov, "Der Kult des Heiligen Fürsten Lazar und seine Gestalt in der Serbischen Graphik des XVIII. Jahrhunderts," in Veselin Đuretić (ed.), *Kosovska bitka 1389. godine i njene posledice* (Belgrade: Balkanološki institut SANU, 1991), p. 309. Reprinted by permission of the Institute of Balkan Studies, Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, Belgrade.

The cult even carried over into the realm of horticulture, where the belief became widespread among Serbs that every peony that grew on the Field of the Blackbirds sprouted out of the blood of a fallen Serb soldier.⁵⁴

The earliest Serbian writings about the battle focused on establishing the legitimacy of Lazar's kingship and his status as a martyr for the faith; indeed, it is sometimes recorded that the Serbian Orthodox Church canonized him soon after his death. Like so much else connected with the cult of Lazar, however, even this is disputed. Đorđe Trifunović, for example, claims that Lazar became a saint without any official act of canonization; the renowned theologian and church historian Lazar Mirković is of the same opinion, grounding the claim of sainthood for Lazar in the Orthodox tradition that, for a martyr, no specific ecclesiastical action is necessary because sainthood is already achieved by virtue of martyrdom. Others hold that the Church did canonize Lazar officially, even if the exact date of canonization cannot be determined. However, as Rade Mihaljčić notes, what lies at the heart of the dispute as to how Lazar became a saint is the question as to whether the cult of Lazar was organized by church leaders or arose spontaneously.⁵⁵

Meanwhile, the ambiguous outcome of the battle—Serbs did not lose their kingdom until 1459—allowed another debate, about who had won and who had lost, to continue. Dj. Radojčić, for example, writing as recently as 1955 and citing the anonymous *Prološko žitije kneza Lazara*, a biography of Prince Lazar, claimed that the earliest texts suggested that the Serbian side had won a military victory at Kosovo, while Danilo III, in his aforementioned *Slovo*, judged that neither side had won a victory on that day.⁵⁶ Moreover, while later texts would claim that Miloš Kobilić—described as Lazar's other son-in-law, but possibly a literary invention—had assassinated the sultan in his tent, Danilo's account implied that the Ottoman sultan was killed in battle. It was only later that the story of the assassination was woven into the legend; this version of events first appeared in an account by Constantine the Philosopher, a fifteenth-century Bulgarian historian. But it was only later, in 1497, that the presumed assassin was given a name—in Konstantin Mihailović's *Memoirs of a Janissary*.

On this point, it is of interest that, among the earliest reports of the battle, we find an account alleging that Sultan Murad was killed by Prince Lazar himself in the height of battle (and hence, not assassinated by Kobilić), while other writings which are considered to be associ-

ated with the cult of Lazar claim that it was the other way around—that it was Sultan Murad who personally killed Prince Lazar. As Rade Mihaljčić points out, “Death at the hands of a pagan tsar is of particular importance for the prince’s canonization for it could thus be emphasized that the prince died in the same way as the early Christian martyrs.”⁵⁷ But the version of the legend which has acquired a status as the semi-official version of the state, insofar as it is the version given in the schoolbooks, is that the sultan was assassinated by Kobilic, who is seen thus as a Serbian hero.⁵⁸

Perhaps the first detailed account of the battle came in 1512, in the work of the Turkish writer, Mehmed Neşri. The Turk was given to exaggeration and invention, claiming that Lazar’s army numbered 500,000 troops—a number far in excess of what any medieval prince could muster—and further claiming, contrary to the facts, that Lazar’s forces were more than twice as great as Murad’s.⁵⁹ Moreover, in Neşri’s account, while Murad and his men prayed until dawn, Lazar and his troops spent the night before the battle getting drunk. Just as the legend alleging that Lazar had been visited by St. Elijah or by an angel served to lend the Serbian side a heavenly sanction, so too did this alternative account serve to suggest that the Turkish side enjoyed divine favor. Many of the details of the story which have come down to us entered into the legend in the course of the sixteenth century, so that the Kosovo myth “was well developed by the end of the sixteenth century and beginning of the seventeenth century, but assumed its definitive form in the *History of the Battle of Kosovo*,” an anonymous work published at the beginning of the eighteenth century.⁶⁰

Then, in 1847, the appearance of the epic poem, *The Mountain Wreath*, written by Petar Petrović Njegoš, the Prince-Bishop of Montenegro, gave the legend of Kosovo a much darker interpretation, describing it as a defeat for the Serbian kingdom and linking that defeat to God’s punishment for the Serbs’ alleged disloyalty. Although the poem had, as its main theme, the conflict between Christians and Muslims in Kosovo, it ranged beyond the borders of Kosovo and spewed out intolerance for Muslims. In the words of Njegoš,

*The blasphemers of Christ’s name
we will baptize with water or with blood!
We’ll drive the plague out of the pen!
Let the song of horror ring forth,
a true altar on a blood-stained rock.*⁶¹

For Njegoš, the heavenly kingdom is not the autonomous Church but is to be won by taking up the sword against Serbs who converted to Islam, who thus “betrayed” the nation. Recasting Kobilić as Obilić—in reflection of an eighteenth-century editing of the original name⁶²—Njegoš describes a collective dream shared by Danilo and the Serb chieftains of that day. In this unlikely shared vision, the dreams imagine “a resplendent Miloš Obilić flying above them on a white horse” and taking an oath to massacre all converts who will not return to Christianity. With this, Kobilić ceases to be the national patriot who shows his loyalty to his prince by assassinating the sultan and becomes instead “the martyr of national purity, the genocidal Christ.”⁶³

Lazar in the Camp of Serb Nationalists

In spite of the multiple variants and alternative accounts of the Battle of Kosovo which had been offered over the centuries, by the mid-twentieth century, the dominant version was one which stressed not only that the battle represented a national tragedy for Serbia but also that it signified symbolically, if not also in historical terms, “the disastrous end of the glorious mediaeval era of Serbia and the beginning of a long lasting slavery under the ‘Turkish yoke’.”⁶⁴ The collaborationist regime of Milan Nedić (1941–1944) played a role in this process, by promoting the myth of Lazar’s choice of the heavenly kingdom, on the eve of battle, to a central place in Serbian national mythology.⁶⁵ The Battle of Kosovo, thus, came to symbolize the spirit of resistance, hostility to Muslims, and, by forgetting the presence of Christian Albanian soldiers in Prince Lazar’s army, also more recently the supposedly ‘eternal’ struggle between Serb and Albanian. A song cited by Antonijević is also relevant here; in this song, a chorus intones,

*Oh, you who are in heaven,
Father of the poor,
give me a hero,
who, with a firm hand,
will destroy the evil-doers
and the janissaries.*⁶⁶

This is not an invocation of Prince Lazar, the pious man who chose martyrdom and a heavenly kingdom over an earthly kingdom, but a call for an avenging angel who would take that entitlement to a heav-

enly kingdom and convert it into an earthly kingdom. It was, of course, Slobodan Milošević, president of the League of Communists of Serbia from 1987 and president of the Republic of Serbia beginning in 1989, who answered that call. The cult of Prince Lazar and of the Battle of Kosovo was stepped up almost immediately after Milošević assumed power. Book publishers responded to the call with books about Kosovo, folk singers responded with sentimental songs about Kosovo, there was even a perfume manufacturer who obliged by producing a new fragrance marketed as “Miss 1389.” While the press published a series of interviews, articles, and historical retrospectives focusing on the sufferings of the Serbian people during World War Two (but never talking about the sufferings of the other peoples of Yugoslavia during that fratricidal conflict), as well as on other sufferings of the Serbs, it was Kosovo which provided the unifying myth and the banner under which Serbs could rally. Thus, too, in the famous Memorandum drawn up by members of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Art, Kosovo was given a special emphasis, insofar as the claim was now registered that the Albanians of Kosovo were perpetuating nothing less than genocide in this heartland of medieval Serbia. Orthodox clerics had been saying even before Milošević came to power that Kosovo was “the Serbian Jerusalem” but, before Milošević’s seizure of power, this claim was a form of dissent from the official communist line. Now this claim was endorsed by the regime.

The construction of a specific collective memory of the battle of Kosovo was useful to the regime because the themes of bitterness, injustice, resentment, and righteous anger evoked by that myth were useful to the mobilization for war. If Serbs could see themselves as victims, then they would feel justified in exacting what they would consider revenge. Ironically, in the early 1990s, although the myth of Kosovo was used to justify the suppression of the considerable autonomy which had been enjoyed by provincial authorities in Kosovo, it was also harnessed to the project of mobilizing Serbs for a war to redraw the boundaries with Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina, on the specious argument that “all Serbs should live in one state”—a claim registered by both novelist-turned-politician Dobrica Ćosić and by Milošević himself. It was, moreover, Ćosić who handed the Serbian leader a “magic sword” with his oft-repeated claim that Serbs had never lost a war. The Albanians understood the role of the cult of St. Lazar. Thus, when, in fact, Serbia lost first the War of Yugoslav Succession and then its war with NATO over Kosovo, Albanian demon-

strators took their revenge on the Serbs by pulling down the statue of Prince Lazar in Gnjilane in July 1999, thereby assaulting the cult of Lazar symbolically.⁶⁷

Kosovo remained high on the agenda of Vojislav Koštunica, who became President of Yugoslavia in October 2000 and who served as Prime Minister of Serbia from March 2004 to July 2008. After 9/11 and the declaration of a “war on terror” by US President George W. Bush, Belgrade enjoyed presenting itself as a natural ally in the fight against Islamic extremism and, in late 2003, even sent a contingent of troops to fight alongside American forces against the Taliban in Afghanistan.⁶⁸ Although the international community supported the endeavor of Kosovo’s Albanians to declare an independent state and separate from Serbia, Koštunica remained firmly opposed, repeatedly trying to have the issue referred to the UN Security Council where Russia would veto any endorsement of independence for the Albanians of Kosovo. One could even imagine Koštunica as Prince Lazar reincarnate, fighting a battle he knew he would lose, but welcoming the status of martyr for the Serbian cause.

On 28 June 2007, hundreds of Serbs gathered at the site of the historic battle to mark the anniversary. In a statement given to the daily newspaper *Politika* on that occasion, Koštunica said that a new battle was being waged for control of Kosovo—this time, in his view, between the USA and Serbia. The then prime minister offered that, in his view, “the key question is whether force will prevail over justice in the new Kosovo battle?”⁶⁹ At the same time, Patriarch Pavle, head of the Serbian Orthodox Church, warning that “black clouds” were hanging over Kosovo, recalled once again the role of “Tsar Lazar” in leading the Serbs in the original Battle of Kosovo, and stressed that the Serbs were protecting not just their own interests in Kosovo, but in fact “the sanctities of enlightened mankind.”⁷⁰ Milošević and Pavle are both dead and, at this writing, Koštunica is out of office and perhaps politically dead. But, with Kosovo enshrined in the constitution of 2006 as an integral part of Serbia, the new battle for Kosovo—now a diplomatic battle, rather than a military battle—continues to be waged. As for “Tsar Lazar,” he may be dead in body, but he lives on in myth.

Conclusion

I have considered at some length four dead kings—Stephen of Hungary, Arthur of the Celts, Olav of Norway, and Lazar of Serbia—making passing references also to El Cid and Joan of Arc. Grand Prince Alexander Nevsky (1221–1263) of Russia, who defeated the Livonian Knights in the historic Battle on Lake Chudskoe on 5 April 1242, who was canonized in 1547 by the Russian Orthodox Church, and who was celebrated in Sergei Eisenstein's 1938 film for which Sergei Prokofiev composed the score, certainly belongs to this company. Now, what is striking is that those individuals who were elevated to the status of mythic symbols of the nation tend to be kings or princes or at least, in the case of El Cid, a nobleman (all except Jan Hus and Joan of Arc), warriors (all except Jan Hus, although the warrior image is not central in the cases of Kings Stephen and Arthur), and saints (all except El Cid and King Arthur). Moreover, Prince Lazar and King Olav, like El Cid, Jan Hus, and Joan of Arc, are considered to have been martyrs.

I posed the question earlier: What if Belgrade had promoted a cult of Stefan Nemanja (or St. Simeon the Myrrh-flowing, as he is also known) instead of the cult of Prince-Saint Lazar. Certainly, such a choice would have been available to Belgrade and, had the Belgrade authorities been pursuing different goals in the years following 1987, a cult of St. Simeon/Stefan Nemanja might have made a great deal of sense. But there are at least two reasons why this did not happen. The first is already implicit in what I have just written, viz., that for Belgrade's ambitions in the Milošević era the cult of Lazar was the better choice. The second reason is to be found in the more distant past, and that is that the Church had historically invested vastly more energy in promoting the cult of Lazar than it did on behalf of Stefan Nemanja. And it is for both of these reasons that the cult of Prince-Saint Lazar is still alive in Serbia today, and that Serbia is still affected by Lazar's legacy.

Myths connect the nation with what might be called its "ground of being"—to give Martin Heidegger's phrase a new life; but they do so by defining that "ground of being" for us, if not by creating it. Myths are, among other things, vehicles serving to create collective memory, and those chosen to serve as the heroes and villains in those passion plays also serve to define what will be considered Good and Evil for the nation. Thus, as Njegoš reworked the collective memory, it was Serb converts to Islam who were the chief villains, with Islam cast as

the great Evil for the Serbian nation. Against this, those who kill Muslims may be seen, at least by Njegoš, as “heroes” while the religious and national unity (homogeneity) becomes the greatest Good. If we may say that people are “grounded” when they are in touch with the values of their community—which is not to suggest that it is necessarily always good to accept the values which happen to be dominant in one’s environment—then the “ground of being” may also be understood to constitute the set of values which are determinative for the community.

This “ground of being” shifts over time, as values evolve and change, and is always open to political manipulation. And when elites want to manipulate the values of the community, the national myth often figures as one of the keys to accomplish that task.

Notes

- ¹ Regarding the use of canonization for political purposes, see Michael Goodich, "The Politics of Canonization in the Thirteenth Century: Lay and Mendicant Saints," in *Church History*, Vol. 44, No. 3 (September 1975): 294–307, especially p. 295. See also J. W. McKenna, "Popular Canonization as Political Propaganda: The Cult of Archbishop Scrope," in *Speculum*, Vol. 45, No. 4 (October 1970): 608–623, especially p. 609.
- ² Thomas Emmert, "Prologue to Kosovo: The Era of Prince Lazar," at www.srpska-mreza.com/bookstore/kosovo/kosovo10.htm [accessed on 23 April 2007], p. 3 of 10.
- ³ In medieval Serbian, variously *knaz* or *knjaz*.
- ⁴ Quoted in Radost Ivanova, "Once More About the Kosovo Epos and its Utilisation," in *Ethnologia Balkanica*, Vol. 3 (1999): 192.
- ⁵ Miklós Molnár, *A Concise History of Hungary* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 18.
- ⁶ Lewis L. Kropf, "Pope Sylvester II and Stephen I of Hungary," in *The English Historical Review*, Vol. 13, No. 50 (April 1898): 290–295, especially pp. 290–291.
- ⁷ "Saint Stephen Confessor, King of Hungary: 975–1038," in *EWTN Global Catholic Network*, at www.ewtn.com/library/MARY/STEPHEN.htm [accessed on 16 April 2007].
- ⁸ György Györffy, *King Saint Stephen of Hungary* (Boulder, Colo.: Social Science Monographs, 1994), p. 92.
- ⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 89.
- ¹⁰ Gábor Klaniczay, *Holy Rulers and Blessed Princesses: Dynastic Cults in Medieval Central Europe*, trans. from Hungarian by Éva Pálmai (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 134.
- ¹¹ G. M. Trevelyan, *A Shortened History of England* (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1942; Pelican edition, 1959), p. 107.
- ¹² R. B. Seaberg, "The Norman Conquest and the Common Law: The Levellers and the Argument from Continuity," in *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 24, No. 4 (December 1981): 791.
- ¹³ Quoted in Winston S. Churchill, *A History of the English-Speaking Peoples*, Vol. II. *The Making of the Nation (1066–1377)*, Blenheim Edition (London: Cassell, 1965), pp. 15–16.
- ¹⁴ "King Arthur—How the Legend Developed," in *Caerleon Net*, at www.caerleon.net/history/arthur.page3.htm [accessed on 23 April 2007]. On 6 May 2010, in the course of responding to copy-edits, I reaccessed the main website at <http://www.caerleon.net/history/arthur/index.htm>, which is still active. Once at that website, interested persons may click on the words "How the Legend Developed," as I did on 6 May 2010, which will take them, as it took me, to <http://www.caerleon.net/history/arthur/page3.htm>, which is the identical website as originally accessed in April 2007.

- ¹⁵ The Holy Grail is sometimes understood to be the chalice from which Jesus of Nazareth drank at the famed Last Supper and sometimes understood to be the chalice which captured his blood while he was nailed to the cross. Either way, the chalice was thought to have magical and beneficent powers. Robert de Boron linked the two versions by claiming that Joseph of Arimathea used the chalice from the Last Supper to catch the last drops of blood from Jesus' body on the cross. For further discussion of the legend of the Holy Grail, see John B. Marino, *The Grail Legend in Modern Literature* (Cambridge & Rochester, N.Y.: D. S. Brewer, 2004).
- ¹⁶ Sir Thomas Malory, *Le Morte D'Arthur* (1485), Book XIV, Chapter II, at www.sacred-texts.com/neu/mart/mart375.htm [accessed on 6 December 2007].
- ¹⁷ J. R. Simpson, "King Arthur's Enchanted Sleep: Early Nineteenth Century Legends," in *Folklore*, Vol. 97, No. 2 (1986): 206.
- ¹⁸ C. Grant Loomis, "King Arthur and the Saints," in *Speculum*, Vol. 8, No. 4 (October 1933): 478.
- ¹⁹ For discussion, see W. A. Nitze, "The Exhumation of King Arthur at Glastonbury," in *Speculum*, Vol. 9, No. 4 (October 1934): 355-361. See also James P. Carley (ed.), *Glastonbury Abbey and the Arthurian Tradition* (Cambridge & Rochester, N.Y.: D. S. Brewer, 2001).
- ²⁰ Mary Williams, "King Arthur in History and Legend," in *Folklore*, Vol. 73, No. 2 (Summer 1962): 73.
- ²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 85.
- ²² Kenneth Knight, "The Quest for the Holy Grail," in Anthony Roberts (ed.), *Glastonbury—Ancient Avalon, New Jerusalem* (London: Rider & Co., 1978 [1977]), extracted in Glastonbury's History and traditions, at www.isleofavalon.co.uk/history/h-grail.html [accessed on 6 December 2007].
- ²³ Gordon Hall Gerould, "King Arthur and Politics," in *Speculum*, Vol. 2, No. 1 (January 1927): 45-51.
- ²⁴ Father Olav Müller, "Saint Olav—King of Norway" (1993), reproduced at www.katolsk.no/biografi/olav/english.htm [accessed on 22 April 2007].
- ²⁵ Vera Henriksen, *St. Olav of Norway: King, Saint—and Enigma* (Oslo: Tano, 1985), p. 47.
- ²⁶ "Olav Haraldsson—Olav the Stout—Olav the Saint," in *The Viking Network* at www.viking.no/e/people/st.olav/index.html [accessed on 5 December 2007], p. 2 of 3.
- ²⁷ Asko Timonen, "Saint Olaf's Cruelty: Violence by the Scandinavian King Interpreted over the Centuries," in *Journal of Medieval History*, Vol. 22, Issue 3 (September 1996): 285-296.
- ²⁸ Henriksen, *St. Olav of Norway*, p. 33.
- ²⁹ Olav, as quoted in "The St Olav Frontal," *NIKU*, at www.niku.no/olavs-frontal/english/1_olavs.htm [accessed on 7 December 2007], p. 2 of 4.
- ³⁰ *Ibid.*; and Vera Henriksen, *Hellig Olav* (Oslo: Aschehoug, 1985), p. 175.

- ³¹ Henriksen, *St. Olav of Norway*, p. 41.
- ³² *Ibid.*, pp. 63–64.
- ³³ Composed by the author on 7 December 2007.
- ³⁴ Simon Coupland, *A Saint for all Nations: The Cult of Saint Olaf outside Norway* (Trondheim: Nidaros Domkirkes Restaureringsarbeideres forlag, 1998), pp. 7–9.
- ³⁵ Terje Emblem, Ivar Libæk, and Øivind Stenersen, *Norge 1: Norges Historie før 1850* (Oslo: J. W. Cappelens Forlag, 1997), p. 63. See also Coupland, *A Saint for all Nations*, pp. 6–7.
- ³⁶ Lars Roar Langslet, “The Saint King,” in Stein Thue (ed.), *On the Pilgrim Way to Trondheim* (Trondheim: Tapir, 1998), pp. 8–9.
- ³⁷ Harold W. V. Temperley, *History of Serbia* (New York: Howard Fertig, 1969), p. 100.
- ³⁸ Noel Malcolm, *Kosovo: A Short History* (London: Macmillan, 1998), p. 64.
- ³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 65.
- ⁴⁰ Rade Mihajlić, *The Battle of Kosovo in History and in Popular Tradition*, trans. by Milica Hrgović, Vesna Bjelogrić-Goldsworthy, Ružica and John White (Belgrade: Beogradski izdavačko-grafički zavod, 1989), p. 47.
- ⁴¹ Thomas A. Emmert, “The Battle of Kosovo: Early Reports of Victory and Defeat,” in Wayne S. Vucinich and Thomas A. Emmert (eds.), *Kosovo: Legacy of a Medieval Battle*, A Modern Greek Studies Yearbook Supplement (Minneapolis: Minnesota Mediterranean and East European Monographs, 1991), p. 22.
- ⁴² Alexander Greenawalt, “Kosovo Myths: Karadžić, Njegoš, and the Transformation of Serb Memory,” in *Spaces of Identity*, No. 3 (2001): 52.
- ⁴³ Popović, as summarized in *Ibid.*, p. 53.
- ⁴⁴ Quoted in *Ibid.*, p. 55.
- ⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 57.
- ⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 57.
- ⁴⁷ Quoted in Emmert, “The Battle of Kosovo,” p. 24.
- ⁴⁸ The painting is reproduced as an appendix to Ljubica D. Popovich, “The Battle of Kosovo (1389) and Battle Themes in Serbian Art,” in Vucinich and Emmert (eds.), *Kosovo: Legacy of a Medieval Battle*, p. 287.
- ⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 247.
- ⁵⁰ Dinko Davidov, “Der Kult des Heiligen Fürsten Lazar und seine Gestalt in der Serbischen Graphik des XVIII. Jahrhunderts,” in Veselin Đuretić (ed.), *Kosovska bitka 1389. godine i njene posledice* (Belgrade: Balkanološki institut SANU, 1991), pp. 306–309.
- ⁵¹ Dragislav Antonijević, “Der Kult des Fürsten Lazar in der Folkloretradition,” in Đuretić (ed.), *Kosovska bitka*, p. 321.
- ⁵² *Ibid.*, pp. 317–319.
- ⁵³ Quoted in Thomas A. Emmert, *Serbian Golgotha—Kosovo, 1389* (Boulder, Colo.: East European Monographs, 1990), p. 62.

- ⁵⁴ Antonijević, "Der Kult des Fürsten Lazar," p. 326.
- ⁵⁵ This debate is summarized in Rade Mihaljčić, *Lazar Hrebeljanović—istorija, kult, predanje* (Belgrade: Srpska školska knjiga & Knowledge Press, 2001), p. 150.
- ⁵⁶ Emmert, "The Battle of Kosovo," pp. 26–27.
- ⁵⁷ Mihaljčić, *The Battle of Kosovo in History*, pp. 72–73.
- ⁵⁸ Rade Mihaljčić, *Istorija za 6. razred osnovne škole*, 4th ed. (Belgrade: Zavod za udbenike i nastavna sredstva, 2005), p. 167. The same version is mentioned in Sima Ćirković's history textbook for the high schools; in this case, however, it is mentioned only as a "legend." See S. Ćirković, *Istorija za II razred gimnazije prirodno-matematičkog smera*, 8th ed. (Belgrade: Zavod za udbenike i nastavna sredstva, 2005), p. 76.
- ⁵⁹ Mihaljčić, *The Battle of Kosovo in History*, pp. 32–33.
- ⁶⁰ Jelka Redjep, "Die Kosovo-Legende und die Geschichte über die Kosovo-Schlacht," in Đuretić (ed.), *Kosovska bitka*, p. 302.
- ⁶¹ Quoted in Branimir Anzulović, *Heavenly Serbia: From Myth to Genocide* (London: Hurst & Co., 1999), pp. 51–52.
- ⁶² Vladimir Ćorović, *Istorija Srba* (Belgrade: I. P. Ivanišević & I. P. Logos Art, 2004), p. 253; confirmed in Malcolm, *Kosovo*, pp. 72–73.
- ⁶³ Greenawalt, "Kosovo Myths," p. 61.
- ⁶⁴ Mirjana Prošić-Dvorniċ, "Apocalyptic Thought and Serbian Identity: Mythology, Fundamentalism, Astrology, and Soothsaying as part of Political Propaganda," in *Ethnologia Balkanica*, Vol. 4 (2000): 170.
- ⁶⁵ Milan Ristović, "General M. Nedić—Diktatur, Kollaboration und die patriarchalische Gesellschaft Serbiens 1941–1944," in Erwin Oberländer (ed.), *Autoritäre Regime in Ostmittel- und Südosteuropa 1919–1944* (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 2001), p. 65.
- ⁶⁶ Quoted in Antonijević, "Der Kult des Fürsten Lazar," p. 323.
- ⁶⁷ "KFOR Press Statement, Delivered by Major Jan Joosten, KFOR spokesman," in *KFOR Press Statements* (27 July 1999), at www.nato.int/kosovo/press/1999/k990727a.htm [accessed on 11 January 2000].
- ⁶⁸ New York Times (4 October 2003), online edition.
- ⁶⁹ Quoted in "St. Vitus Day: Dark clouds over Kosovo again," in *Serbianna* (28 June 2007), at www.serbianna.com/news/2007/01909.shtml [accessed on 28 June 2007], p. 2 of 2.
- ⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

Discursive Practices and Semiotic Representations: Serbian Rhetoric about Montenegro and Kosovo

Maciej Czerwiński

The most recent developments in the post-Yugoslav region, both the referendum in Montenegro (May 2006), which led to that republic's formal declaration of independence (June 2006), and the declaration of independence by Kosovo (February 2008), were of a great importance (in social, political, geopolitical, and cultural terms) for the region and for Serbia itself. They deconstructed the political configuration of what was left of Yugoslavia and, what is important for us in this chapter, influenced and stabilized certain movements within semiotic space that underlie communicative behavior, i.e., concrete discursive practices. Since values, be they civic or non-civic, could function only throughout a semiotic system, notably language, any change within the system of culture, understood here as a semiotic space, reflects a system of values. In other words, values are after all cultural values structured by language or more precisely: by communication. It is of course impossible to expect one culture to change overnight as cultural shifts, like linguistic shifts, are accomplished over the long-term. However, one can observe in which direction certain Serbian cultural values go and how they are explicated in public communication when the important political events take place.

In the following chapter, I am going to specify which possible linguistic items are made pertinent in the cases of Montenegro and Kosovo and how this enables some common cultural values to function within the Serbian cultural space. Since cultural values manifest themselves on various communicative levels, I will be concerned only with these linguistic and textual devices that both express and (semiotically) reproduce: (1) the possessiveness of Serbian semiotic space toward cultural units "Kosovo" and "Montenegro," and (2) the representations of "in-group" (US) and the "out-group" (THEM) including some crucial collective symbols. These two aims, divided into two principal sections

(1 and 2), will try to answer the following questions: (A1) how possessiveness is expressed towards “Kosovo” and “Montenegro,” and how intense it is? (I will be primarily concerned with some devices that are less visible in surface structures.) Are there any differences between possessiveness toward “Kosovo” and “Montenegro”? If so, then how are these differences manifested? (A2) I will also be interested in determining how the IN-GROUP and the OUT-GROUP are represented and how collective symbols are employed. Four daily newspapers have been analyzed: *Blic*, *Danas*, *Politika*, and *Večernje novosti* in the same period (for Montenegro, 1 to 3 June 2006; and for Kosovo, 15 to 17 February 2008).

In order to make my research empirically pure, I should admit that in this chapter I am not going to be concerned with the *universe of facts* and states of the world but rather with the *universe of signs* that builds a socially (and thus conventionally) constructed “reality.” In this perspective, we have to bear in mind that, in the universe of facts, there exist certain facts and states of the world which are *observed* by speakers who nominate them and produce their *representations* (signs). Thus, in order to diversify the two universes one should introduce two relevant graphic conventions: slashes are expressions for sign-vehicles (for instance /Kosovo/, /brat/ (/brother/¹, etc.) while quotation marks (“ ”) indicate—following Umberto Eco—something “intended as content” (“Kosovo,” “a brother,” etc.). In this perspective the sign-vehicle /Kosovo/ corresponds to the content “Kosovo” but since the content “Kosovo” could be expressed in various ways (for instance /južna srpska pokrajina/, or /Kosmet/) there are various ways in which the content is structured and conceptualized. Thus, the content itself might be exposed in diverse possible ways and—accordingly—perceived by a receiver. Such a variation of possible forms allows a sender to *produce* and, at the same time, *reproduce* certain images (and viewpoints) of the content that bring an axiology and ideologies into existence (and—at the same time—exists because they exist). Thus, the very use of a sign-vehicle might be in fact taken as a cultural and ideological manifestation. The signs compose more complex linguistic forms, namely concrete discourses that reproduce matrixes and mythologies that constantly exist in Serbian culture.

To discover Serbian values and their semiotic representations I will deal with—both quantitatively and qualitatively—linguistic terms, presuppositions, and rhetorical devices. Thus, this chapter aims at com-

paring the two cases as well as reconstructing semiotic differences and conceptualizations among the most prominent daily newspapers in Serbia. As far as methodology is concerned, the semiotic and rhetoric tradition as well as that of critical discourse analysis (CDA) will be taken into account in order to discover the construction of discursive practices that bring into existence various ideological codes. According to semiotic approaches, any linguistic (and semiotic) event is taken not as a pure realization of the code but rather as a message that is emitted from a certain viewpoint and thus it bears the axiology and ideology of a sender. Therefore, any message is understood as a manifestation of ideology. However, any piece of discourse not only reflects ideologies but also it shapes them by reproducing them in discourse and by discourse. In addition, following Roger Fowler, I shall understand that “the *content* of newspapers is not facts about the world but in a very general sense *ideas*.”² This means that any particular linguistic manifestation is to be considered as one of as many possible linguistic manifestations as there are many possible *ideas* about what certain facts “look like.” Therefore, it must be made absolutely clear that a linguistic convention which is chosen by a sender to *describe* states of the world is the way he *prefers* to describe it; thus, the description reflects his axiology and ideology or group membership she/he belongs to. Provided, however, that this speaker—like any other speaker— is a follower of certain social and individual ideologies (Umberto Eco calls them “competences”³), the result of the preferred version is, what Berger and Luckmann call “the social construction of reality.” Consequently, the research in this chapter will aim at pointing out some crucial semantic centers that underlie discursive practices and thus *re-construct one of possible social realities*.

Quantitative Remarks

Let us first look how many pieces of news were directly devoted to these particular cases: the Montenegrin case from 1 June to 3 June 2006 and the Kosovo case from 15 February to 17 February 2008 (it must be said that no editorials and interviews were taken into account since it would direct our attention to different semiotic phenomena).

Table 1. Number of news items

	Montenegro	Kosovo
<i>Blic</i>	10	29
<i>Danas</i>	6	23
<i>Politika</i>	13	50
<i>Večernje novosti</i>	15	66

This preliminary sketch gives us an idea of the prominence and importance assigned to these events. We can see, as one could easily assume, that the Kosovo case was incomparably more thoroughly covered than the Montenegrin proclamation so that one might infer that “Kosovo” as a cultural unit was, in this concrete period of time, more crucial in Serbian semiotic space than was “Montenegro.” I emphasize that I am not speaking about referents but rather about cultural units.

Let me then present a sketch of the quantitative research of lexemes and other expressions that were employed as far as the designates “Kosovo” and “Montenegro” were concerned.

What is important to observe is the fact that all of the newspaper coverage regarding the unit “Kosovo” predominantly use the term /Kosovo/ (from 47.52% in *Politika* up to 62.76% in *Večernje novosti*), less often /Kosovo i Metohija/ (from 14.46% in *Danas* up to 28.03%). If we compare other expressions, certain differences are becoming

Table 2. Expressions denoting “Kosovo”

	<i>Večernje novosti</i>	<i>Danas</i>	<i>Politika</i>	<i>Borba</i>
/Kosmet/	36 6.7%	1 0.60%	32 10.57%	6 4.55%
/Kosovo i Metohija/	79 14.71%	24 14.46%	71 23.43%	37 28.03%
/KiM/	38 7.08%	24 14.46%	10 3.30%	4 3.03%
/Kosovo/	337 62.76%	95 57.24%	144 47.52%	68 51.52%
/province/Province/ (/pokrajina/Pokrajina/)	26 4.84%	18 10.84%	36 11.88%	12 9.09%
/Southern (Serbian) Province/ (/južna (/srpska) pokrajina/)	21 3.91	4 2.40%	10 3.30%	5 3.78%
ALTOGETHER	537 100%	166 100%	330 100%	132 100%

obvious; thus *Danas* employs the abbreviation /KiM/ most often (14.46%), while the other newspapers use it marginally (from 3.03% in *Borba* up to 7.08% in *Večernje novosti*).

At the same time, in contrast, the term /Kosmet/ (which has a strong axiological and possessive capacity) is used in *Večernje novosti*, *Politika*, and *Borba* (from 10.57% in *Politika* to 4.55% in *Borba*), while *Danas* definitely avoids it (one example is a quotation coming from a coverage of protests throughout the country, see: “The community of Serbian municipalities and villages of Kosovo and Metohija called all the Serbs in KiM to reject ‘the declaration of Albanian separatists on Kosmet independence’” in public manifestations in Mitrovica, Gračanica, Štrpce i Ranilug” (Serbian: “*Zajednica srpskih opština i naselja Kosova i Metohije pozvala je sve Srbe na KiM da u ponedeljak u podne na javnim skupovima u Mitrovici, Gračanicima, Štrpcu i Ranilugu odbace ‘deklaraciju albanskih separatista o nezavisnosti Kosmeta’*”) (*Danas*, 16 February 2008, p. 3). We find a somewhat similar situation in *Borba* where three instances out of six are quotations from Vojislav Koštunica (*Borba*, 15 February 2008, p. 2); another is employed in the title (“Kosmet always in Serbia” (Serbian: “*Kosmet zauvek u Srbiji*”), *Borba*, 15 February 2008, p. 3) of a brief piece of news item concerning Vuk Drašković’s statement (what is strange is the fact that Drašković does not seem to have used the word /Kosmet/ himself and one must presume that this was inserted by the newspaper); one is used—as in *Danas*—as a quotation (*Borba*, 17 February 2008, p. 3); and the last one as a title (“Serbs will not leave Kosmet” (Serbian: “*Srbi se neće seliti sa Kosmeta*”), *Borba*, Feb 17, p. 4). In addition, neither *Danas* nor *Borba* employed adjectives derived from this noun. In our base, on the contrary, the following derivatives appeared in *Večernje novosti* and *Politika*: /Kosmet Albanians/, /Kosmet leaders/, /Kosmet government/, /Kosmet problem/, /Kosmet Serbs/, /Kosmet institutions/ (Serbian: /*kosmetiski Albanci*/, /*kosmetiski lideri*/, /*kosmetiska vlada*/, /*kosmetiski problem*/, /*kosmetiski Srbi*/, /*kosmetiske institucije*/).

Comparing the Kosovo case with that of Montenegro, one is faced with a completely different semiotic situation because, when designating “Montenegro,” there is only one expression employed, namely the sign-vehicle /*Crna Gora*/. There do not exist other expressions such as, for instance, some expressions one might expect: /former Yugoslav republic/, /former republic of the common state/, /a part of the common state/ (Serbian: /*bivša jugoslovenska republika*/, /*bivša republika zajedničke države*/, /*deo zajedničke države*/), etc.

Possessiveness

It goes without saying that the term “possessiveness” differs very much from the expression “right to possession” as the former is a conceptualization that exists as a strong cultural (and invisible) attitude, while the latter might be defined as a persuasive argumentation employed in order, for instance, to explain the possessiveness itself. Once the *possessiveness*—understood in the first sense—is established, it easily becomes a pertinent unit of the cultural universe, that is to say of the semiotic space. Thus, possessiveness is a sort of (semiotic) projection that subordinates some entities under some cultural units in articulated language; for instance, we say /British Empire/, and when we say /Paris/ we assume that /Paris/ is the capital of /France/, and thus is a part of the French universe. Both /the Empire/ and /Paris/ are sign-vehicles which are subordinated by the cultural unit “Britain” and “France”; thus, both “Britain” and “France” establish possessiveness over these units. The same thing occurs with literary languages. “Literary language” exists because there are other non-literary languages (called dialects but there are many more codes). Thus, its “literariness” (its “betterness”) is established as a possessive act as it has the ability to establish it and to subordinate other codes. This is not a question of whether the Serbian language differs from Bosnian, Croatian, and Montenegrin (in strict linguistic terms); the question is whether some codes are able to establish their “literariness”: it suffices for some legal acts, some dictionaries, grammars, and—what is important in particular—mythology or narrative about the language with some possessiveness coded. What I want to say is that establishing subordination or dependence does not necessarily have anything to do with any organic truthfulness or falseness of some groups such as, notably, nations (organic unity, that is to say belonging to one dialect could be important but it is not necessary): in semiotic terms the difference between the Montenegrin language and, say, the French language (apart from linguistic differences, and the longer history of the latter) is that French culture was able *earlier* (culturally and politically) to establish its autonomy and dominance, thus calling itself “French.” Thus, subordination is a cultural process that structures our thought and that exists in the cognition of the very group and its semiotic practices.

Possessiveness in my terms will not just be a concrete piece of communication that expresses a possessive attitude (explicit posses-

sive pronouns and possessive adjectives for instance); it can be manifested by the very semantic content (most often connotation rather than denotation) of a particular word and thus becomes a pertinent and stable unit, semiotically structured and part of the very code. It is, thus, less visible, “between the lines”; but not less influential as it—invisibly—structures one’s cognition as with the example of /Paris/; nobody would say /Paris is English/ because this cognition has been stabilized by the course of history, in particular by narratives that are responsible for establishing this possessive dependence.

There are many ways of expressing and, at the same time, establishing possessiveness. Let us list some possessive devices concerning both “Kosovo” and “Montenegro.”

Explicit and Implicit Possessiveness

Kosovo

Firstly, we may try to collect some explicit expressions that operate as vehicle for possessiveness. In our case, we find the following ones: (/our(s)/) (Serbian: neutral /naše/ and feminine /naša/) which remains merely a part of the politicians’ discourses, or /Southern Serbian province/, /Southern Serbian province/, /Southern province/, /Province/, /Southern Serbian climates/ (Serbian: /južna srpska pokrajina/, /južna pokrajina/, /srpska pokrajina/, /Pokrajina/, /južna srpska podneblja/), and some others which are originally a part of newspapers’ discursive practices (or such predications: “Kosovo is Serbia,” “Kosovo is here,” “Kosovo is the heart of Serbia” (Serbian: “Kosovo je Srbija,” “Srbija je ovde,” “Kosovo je srce Srbije”). *Večernje novosti*, *Politika*, and *Borba* were mostly employing these possessive expressions while covering events. However, such possessive expressions are not stable units in all the newspapers. For instance in *Danas*, as we see in Table 2, the expressions /južna srpska pokrajina/, /južna pokrajina/, and /srpska pokrajina/ are either direct or indirect quotations. This means that they are not immanent units of discourses in *Danas* in this particular period.

There was another way of expressing possessiveness, but implicitly. If one compares certain terms that tend to question and, at the same time, to bring into disrepute Kosovo’s independence, for instance: /fake state/ (Serbian: /lažna država/), /phantom-state/ (Serbian: /fantomska država/), /fictive state/ (Serbian: /fiktivna država/), one might easily see that they play an important role in reproducing possessiveness. We

may assume that the noun /state/ (Serbian: /država/) in this context is perceived in its substantiality as if it decides about the very “existence” or “non-existence” of a being. Thus, adjectives /lažna/, /fantomska/, /fiktivna/ not only discredit the designate “independent Kosovo” but also petrify the “truthfulness” of “Serbia” as a cultural unit. In addition, these syntagmatic constructions were in some cases employed along with adverbials such as /on Serbian territory/ (Serbian: /na srpskoj teritoriji/) that were again in favor of confronting “true states” (“existence”) and “false states” (“non-existence”), while the adjective /Serbian/ (/srpska/) expresses possessiveness which is ethnically structured.

Presuppositions are tools that might express possessiveness implicitly, “between the lines.” Presuppositions are understood as “background assumptions” which exist in utterances against “foreground assertions”; we may put it in this way: something is overtly asserted (“foreground assertions”) and something is presupposed by the very existence of the background assumption.⁴ For our present purposes, we may simplify the notion of presupposition and identify it with a “common ground” or “common knowledge” that is shared by the sender and the receiver of the message; it underlies any assertion that is to say it presupposes it (we cannot mix presuppositions with implications, which are different sort of inferences⁵).

We may assume that such a device—in which we may “say” something without asserting it explicitly—is one of the most used figures in any discourse, notably in discourses that are persuasive. It is unnecessary to give any well-known examples from logical literature, as our database provides many of them. It has to be stated, however, that the presuppositions in which we are interested at the moment “are tied to particular words,”⁶ that is to say they exist by the very fact that certain words exist; and these words are called “presupposition-triggers.” In the case of Kosovo, among the most frequent are: (i) change of state verbs and nominalizations, (ii) temporal clauses, (iii) verbs and nominalizations that are directed to positively evaluate the present state (presupposition-triggers are bolded):

(i) “the **loss** of Kosovo” (“**gubitak** Kosova”) [presupposing that Kosovo is/was a part of Serbia] (*Večernje novosti*, 15 February 2008, p. 5), “tries to **tear off** from Serbia a part of its territory” (“**pokušava da Srbiji otima** deo njene teritorije”) [presupposing that Kosovo is a part of Serbian territory] (*Večernje novosti*, 15 February 2008, p. 5), “**detachment** from Serbia” (“**odvajanje** od Srbije”) [presupposing that

Kosovo is a part of Serbian territory] (*Politika*, 16 February 2008, p. A6), “and each of such trials will end up, sooner or later, **returning back** Kosovo and Metohija to the protection of the mother-state” (“*a svaki takav pokušaj završi se—pre ili kasnije—povratkom Kosova i Metohije pod okrilje matične države*”) [presupposing that Kosovo is a part of Serbian territory] (Vladimir Radomirović, *Politika*, 17 February 2008, p. A1). All of them presuppose that either now or in the past **there exists or existed** something as “Kosovo” that is/was a part of Serbia. Moreover, some expressions presuppose that Kosovo is Serbia itself (for instance: “tries to **tear off** from Serbia a part of its territory,” and so on) which in turn presuppose the very existence of one entity, “one Serbia,” that either existed or still exists.

(ii) “The flag will be put at half-mast until Serbia will **again** govern Kosovo and Metohija” (“*Zastava na pola koplja ostaće podignuta sve dok Srbijia ne bude **ponovo** vladala Kosovom i Metohijom*”) (Tomislav Nikolić, *Večernje novosti*, 15 February 2008, p. 4) [presumes that Serbia governs/governed Kosovo].

(iii) “to **defend** the sovereignty and integrity of Serbia” (“*braniti suverenitet i integritet Srbije*”) [presupposing that Serbia is a sovereign and integral state] (*Politika*, 15 February 2008, p. A1) or “**safe-guarding** the sovereignty and integrity of Serbia” (“*očuvanje teritorijalnog integriteta i suvereniteta Srbije*”) [presupposing that Serbia is a sovereign and integral state] (Boris Tadić, *Danas*, 16 February 2008, p. 3). If we /defend/ something or we want to /prevent/ something, it means that this something **indeed exists**. If one asserts that one wants to /defend/ or /prevent/ something from something else, one presupposes—in the very background—that both the sender of the message and its receiver agree that “sovereignty and integrity of Serbia” indeed is a case; this is the way the sender absolutizes /Serbian integrity/ as a cultural unit and—to some extent—re-establishes it semiotically.

However, realistically speaking, after 1999 (and the Resolution of Security Council of United Nations 1244) Kosovo was not **in practice** a part of Serbia, whereas it was a part of Serbia **semiotically**. Putting the matter this way, one might say that even after the proclamation of independence, Kosovo **will still be, semiotically**, a (/sovereign/ and /integral/) part of Serbia, at least for some Serbian cultural codes and, of course, according to the Serbian law. This will (re-)constitute and (re-)establish narrations that will reproduce many of their cultural contents and mythologies.

Montenegro

Comparing the case of Montenegro with that of Kosovo, possessiveness is far less expressed. There are no expressions like /Southern Serbian Province/, /Southern Province/, /Serbian Province/, /Province/ or pronouns /our/. As far as presuppositions and any implicit possessiveness are concerned, they are also much less frequent and the intensity of the possessiveness towards the cultural unit “Montenegro” is much weaker. There are, however, some presuppositions that might be taken as expressing, “between the lines,” a possessive attitude vis-à-vis the cultural unit “Montenegro,” such as: “he needs to express himself about the **detachment** of Montenegro” (“*treba da se izjasni o odvajanju Crne Gore*”) (*Borba*, 3 June 2006, p. 5), “there exists **no longer** the common state of Serbia and Montenegro because the decision made by the Parliament of Montenegro by which Montenegro **leaves** from the common state constitutes the very moment of **disruption**” (“*više nema državne zajednice SCG, jer se za trenutak njenog prekida uzima odluka Skupštine Crne Gore kojom Crna Gora istupa iz državne zajednice*”) (*Danas*, 3 June 2006, p. 1), “**endurance** of the common state” (“*opstanak zajedničke države*”) (*Politika*, 1 June 2006, p. A1), “the declaration maintains that Montenegro is a sovereign state which **has restored** its independence” (“*deklaracijom se konstatuje da je Crna Gora suverena država koja je obnovila samostalnost*”) (*Politika*, 3 June 2008, p. A8), “Tomislav Nikolić about the **nipping off/detachment** of Montenegro” (“*Tomislav Nikolić o otcepljenju Crne Gore*”) (*Večernje novosti*, 2 June 2006, p. 5). Thus, the verbs /to detach/, /to leave/, /to endure/, /to nip off/, /no longer/ (and their nominalizations) presuppose and petrify a concept of existing or not-anymore-existing togetherness, i.e., that “this something” (/the common state/, /Serbia and Montenegro/, etc.) **indeed exists** or **recently existed**.

On the contrary the word /restoring/ (in the “restoration of the Montenegrin independence” (“*obnova crnogorske nezavisnosti*”) (*Danas*, 3 June 2008, p. 1)—which has been a key-word in Montenegrin pro-independent ideologies—conceptualizes the act of independence in a different way, that is to say it perceives it not as the semiosis of the “end” of something but rather as a “new beginning” (/independence/)⁷. It must be said that this lexeme in *Politika* is rather used in reported speech, i.e., it cannot be attributed to the newspaper’s discourse but to the discourse of the signers of the Declaration of Independence.

Who—What—How

When referring to (and thus describing) the two proclamations of independence, many linguistic sign-vehicles are possible which, as we will see, reflect either possessiveness or some axiology concerning the IN-GROUP and the OUT-GROUP. Let us now look at all linguistic expressions that were employed in order to refer to three crucial semantic units, namely: WHO did? WHAT did? HOW did it?

Table 3. Expressions concerning “proclamation of independence”:
who, what, how

	WHO	WHAT	HOW
KOSOVO	1. /Albanians/ 2. /Albanians of Kosovo/ ⁸ 3. /Albanian separatists/ ⁹ 4. /parliament of the province/ 5. /temporary/ provisional institutions of KIM/ 6. /temporary/ provisional organs of local government in Kosovo and Metohija/ 7. /temporary/provisional institutions of Kosmet/ 8. /Priština/ 9. /Kosovian parliament/ 10. /parliament of the Southern Serbian province/	1. /proclamation of the independence of (Kosovo and Metohija)/ 2. /decision on independence/ 3. /proclamation of the false state on the territory of Serbia (independent Kosovo)/ 4. /tearing off the Serbian province/ 5. /tearing off its territory/ 6. /nipping off/ detachment of a part of its territory/ 7. /nipping off Kosovo/ 8. /detachment from Serbia/ 9. /creating a phantom creature on the territory of our state/	1. /by force/ 2. /unilaterally/ 3–5. /unlawfully/ 6. /non-legally/ 7. /by itself/

	WHO	WHAT	HOW
KOSOVO		10. /illegal act/ 11. /secession act/ or /secession of Kosovo/ 12. /shift of the sta- tus/ (<i>Danas</i>) 13. /self-declared independence/ (<i>Politika</i>) 14. /independence of Kosovo/ (<i>Politika</i>) 15. /declaration of so called inde- pendent repub- lic of Kosovo/ 16. /decision on independence/ 17. /declaration of independence/ or /accept the Declaration of independence/	
MONTENEGRO	1. /Montenegro/ 2. /members of parliament/ 3. /Montenegrin parliament/ 4. /members of Montenegrin parliament/ 5. /members of parliament of the governing collation/	1. /declaration of independence/ 2. /sovereignty of Montenegro/ 3. /Montenegrin independence/ 4. /accept declaration of independence/ the decision on independence accepted/ 5. /accept Decision on independence of Montenegro/ 6. /declare inde- pendence/ ¹⁰	1. /formal- ly/officially/ 2. /falsified and blackmailed/ (quotation of Predrag Bulatović)

	WHO	WHAT	HOW
MONTENEGRO		7. /become internationally considered a state/ 8. /to verify/ and /verification of the results of referendum/	

The first issue that has to be mentioned is of a quantitative nature, namely there are a lot of more expressions concerning “Kosovo” than “Montenegro”: *who* (11-5), *what* (17-8), and *how* (7-2). The only explanation of this state of affairs of which one might be sure is that, as was already said, “Kosovo” was more important than “Montenegro.” In other words, within Serbian culture there was much more need to refer to “Kosovo” and to do it in many ways, that is to say to present this cultural unit from many angles. This makes it variously conceptualized and thus variously perceived when decoded.

Concerning the first question (*who*) we see that all four expressions in the case of Montenegro are put within the political domain but three various conceptualizations are taken: **state** (/Montenegro/), **legal institutions of the state** (/Montenegrin parliament/) and **agents** who represent legality of the state (/members of the Montenegrin parliament/, /members of parliament/). This strategy—even though there were certain negative attitudes conveyed in the press concerning the proclamation of independence (as will be dealt with in section 2.0)—foregrounds that the driving force of the very process is “legal” and “legitimate” (but the expression /members of the governing coalition/ exposes the fact that the act of proclamation of independence was legal but, was a policy of one political option). As for the case of Kosovo, one can easily maintain that there is only one expression that, more or less, corresponds to Montenegrin representations, i.e., /(Kosovar) parliament/¹¹ (in addition it is very rare and it is not recorded in *Danas*). The predominant expressions conceptualize three domains: (i) **ethnicity/nationality** (/Albanians/, /Kosovar Albanians/), (ii) **illegality** (/Albanian separatists/ and /“Albanian separatists”/ (in quotation marks, *Danas*)) and (iii) **possessiveness** (/the parliament of the province/, /temporary/provisional institutions of KiM/, /temporary/provisional organs of local

government in Kosovo and Metohija/, /temporary/provisional institutions of Kosmet/). This variety of conceptualizations—which might have been employed referring to “Montenegro” as some of them are indeed lexicalized (see potentially: /Montenegrins/, /parliament of the republic/)—strengthens our hypothesis that “Kosovo” as a unit both plays a more important role in Serbian semiotic space than “Montenegro” and that the legal-political domain is used in order to justify cultural possessiveness.

As for the second question (*what*), there again it is pretty obvious that the case of Kosovo expresses either (i) a more or less neutral **political act** (/proclamation/declaration of independence of Kosovo and Metohija/, /decision of independence/, /declaration of independence/, /accept the Declaration of independence of Kosovo/, /shift of the status/) or more often (ii) an **illegal political act**: /proclamation of the false state on the territory of Serbia (independent Kosovo)/, /tearing off the Serbian province/, /tearing off its territory/, /nipping off/detachment of a part of its territory/, /nipping off Kosovo/, /detachment from Serbia/, /creating a phantom creature on the territory of our state/, /illegal act/, /secession act/ or /secession of Kosovo/, etc. The list shows that this political act is conceptualized either as a **semiosis of the end** of some cultural and substantial togetherness: /tearing off/, /nipping off/ and /detachment/ or as a **semiosis of falseness**: /self-declared/, /so-called/, /phantom creature/ and quotation marks. It goes without saying, as I have already stated, that the following nominalizations: /tearing off/, /nipping off/ and /detachment/ presuppose that “something” (a being) indeed does exist. The case of Montenegro again is conceptualized within a legal-political domain; see for instance expressions: /verification/, /verify/ (they were not used in respect to Kosovo partially because there was no referendum on that issue).

And finally questions of *how* confirm that the two events are put within two opposed domains: (1) Montenegro—legality (/officially/ formally/ and quotation by Predrag Bulatović that was recorded only once) and (2) Kosovo—illegality (/by force/, /unilaterally/, /unlawfully/, /un-legally/, /by itself/). The illegality of Kosovo’s independence is in turn conceptualized within three componential domains: (2a) **power**: /by force/, (2b) **one-sidedness**: /unilaterally/, (2c) **crime**: /unlawfully/, /un-legally/, /by itself/. This triad constitutes a semiosis of Serbian victimization in this case.

The In-Group and the Out-Group

We can now turn to analyzing semiotic strategies employed in reproducing the IN-GROUP (that is people in “Serbia”) and the OUT-GROUP, i.e., people in Kosovo and people in Montenegro.

Ethnic and political collectives

When referring to political groups, one can easily see that in the Serbian language (and also in the Polish and other Slavic languages) there exist two different conceptualizations: a legal-political (territorial) and an ethnic-national. For instance, when speaking about sign-vehicles */građani/* and */državljani/* (both in English are equivalent to */citizens/* and will be translated thus in this paper) one knows that in general, in the Serbian language, both of them express the legal-political category, i.e., membership within a political collectivity. In addition, semantically speaking, they are clearly opposed to such expressions as */Albani-ans/*, */Serbs/*, */Montenegrins/* which refer in turn to membership in an ethnic collectivity. It goes without saying that such a binary construction of these categories evokes many contradictions and problems when translating into Serbian language the English or French expressions such as */national/*, */nation/*, etc. (French */nationalité/* is sometimes translated as */državljanstvo/* but not as */nacionalnost/*). This profound difference within semantic content probably results from a different conceptualization of collective symbolic space: one is more political (Western Europe), while the other is more ethnic (Eastern Europe).¹² Thus, when using the term */državljani Crne Gore/* we are referring to all people who have a Montenegrin passport but, on the one hand, being a */državljan Crne Gore/* one can easily be */nationally Serb/* or */nationally Albanian/* (*/po nacionalnosti Srbin, Hrvat, Albanac/*), etc. (there are more expressions such as */claim to be a Serbian/* (*/izjašnjava-ti se kao Srbin/*), (*/to be a Serb and a Croatian citizen/* (*/biti Srbin i hrvatski državljani/*)). Thus, to be a Montenegrin does not necessarily mean to be a */citizen of Montenegro/* (*/državljanin Crne Gore/*) but to be a Montenegrin could mean in turn to be a */citizen of Serbia/* (*/državljanin Srbije/*) or even a */citizen of France/* (this semantic property is not exclusively typical for the languages of Eastern Europe but in these languages is more radically expressed). A good example is to be found in our database. When covering Serbian politicians’ comments on

Montenegro, Tomislav Nikolić, the vice-president of the Serbian Radical Party (SRS), said:

- (1) As far as the radicals [members of the Serbian Radical Party—M.Cz.] are concerned, the **citizens of Montenegro** will be divided into **two groups. Montenegrins**, who will be in Serbia considered foreigners and **Serbs from Montenegro** who will not be foreigners and who will have our support if they want to enjoy minority rights [in Montenegro—M.Cz.]. As far as I am concerned, I think the co-operation with the Montenegrin authority has to be limited to the least dimension, whereas the co-operation with the Serbs in Montenegro has to be increased to the highest dimension, Nikolić said. (*Večernje novosti*, 2 June 2006, p. 5¹³).

We will now look at how the two categories are represented in our case.

/Gračani/ and /državljeni/

Let us now try to examine the usage of lexemes */gračani/* and */državljeni/* in respect to “Kosovo” and “Montenegro.” When covering the Montenegrin case, the media were very much in favor of the lexeme */državljeni/*, which is easily understood as many actors were discussing the issue of double citizenship (Serbian: “*dvojno državljanstvo*”). Thus, we find the following expressions: “Citizens of Serbia who live in Montenegro” (“*Državljeni Srbije koji žive u Crnoj Gori*”), “Citizens of Serbia who live on Montenegrin territory” (“*Državljeni Srbije koji žive na crnogorskoj teritoriji*”), “Montenegrin citizens in Serbia” (“*Državljeni Crne Gore u Srbiji*”), “Lončar recalled that in Serbia there live 270,000 citizens of Montenegro” (“*Lončar je podsetio da u Srbiji živi oko 270.000 državljana Crne Gore*”). One can see, on the other hand, that in some contexts the lexeme */gračani/* was equated with that of */državljeni/*. What is important to underline is that the lexemes */gračani/* and */državljeni/* in these contexts expose very overtly a territorial component of their semantic property, so that a political component is supplemented by the territorial one.

In the case of Kosovo, the lexeme */državljeni/* is not represented at all while the lexeme */gračani/* occurs but in a very specific context which might be seen from the following quotations from the media:

- (2) “And by this decision the government of the Republic of Serbia confirms that **the Serbs and all citizens of the Autonomous Province**

of Kosovo and Metohija who recognize the state of Serbia are fully the rightful and equal citizens of the Republic of Serbia” (*Borba*, 15 February 2008, p. 4¹⁴).

- (3) “The government will do its best to make its presence in KiM—as the immanent part of Serbia and according to the international law and the Constitution of Serbia—broader, stronger and tougher, making at the same time life normal to **the Serbs and all other citizens of KiM who are loyal to Serbia**, Koštunica emphasized.” (*Danas*, 15 February 2008, p. 1¹⁵).
- (4) “**All of those citizens who are loyal** and who respect the legal order, are fully equal. **Those citizens who respect the law** have the right not to recognize the illegal acts which means they do not recognize injustice, and this is completely logical.” (*Politika*, 15 February 2008, p. A1¹⁶).
- (5) **Those citizens of Kosovo who are loyal to Serbia** need to be supported and the state should engage its resources to buy as much property as possible in Kosovo (...), Nikolic said (*Politika*, 15 February 2008, p. A7¹⁷).
- (6) “The declaration according to which Kosovo is proclaimed as independent and sovereign state will contain pieces of preamble of the proposal of the new constitution of Kosovo in which will be underlined that Kosovo is a **state of all of its citizens**.” (*Politika*, 16 February 2008, p. A6¹⁸).
- (7) “The Prime Minister of Serbia Vojislav Koštunica emphasized yesterday that Serbia has to ensure by its national policy (*državnom i nacionalnom politikom*) a safe and normal life for all citizens of Kosovo and Metohija who **respect the state of Serbia**.” (*Politika*, 17 February 2008, p. A8¹⁹).

As we can see, the syntagmatic construction /citizens of Kosovo/ (or contextually synonymic /its citizens/) is very rare but whenever it appears (a) it is sometimes followed by expressions which specify that the sign-vehicle /citizens of Kosovo/ might only exist as long as **legal loyalty** has been previously established (see quotations: 2, 3, 4, 5, 7) and the key words: “Autonomous Province,” “loyal,” “respect law,” etc.); (b) it is sometimes a part of a statement in reported speech (see quotation 6).

Ethnonyms

Let us now look at sign-vehicles and constructions that, in contrast, express ethnic conceptualization. With respect to ethnonyms we may expect primarily plural nouns such as /Montenegrins/ and /Albanians/ as they reflect ethnic-national perception from the angle of Serbian culture.

Table 4. Ethnonyms

	<i>Večernje novosti</i>	<i>Danas</i>	<i>Politika</i>	<i>Borba</i>
/Montenegrins/ (/Crnogorci/) (1–3 June 2006)	5	2	1	0
/Albanians/ (/Albanci/) (15–17 February 2008)	71	11	44	4

There are two things in Table 4 that need to be mentioned: (a) there are many more sign-vehicles /Albanians/ than /Montenegrins/²⁰ (130-8), and (b) *Večernje novosti* and *Politika* predominantly use ethnic qualifications (altogether *Večernje novosti*: 76 and *Politika*: 45) while *Danas* and *Blic* for the most part avoid using ethnic qualifications (altogether *Danas*: 13 and *Blic*: 4). One may infer that this means that (a') the proclamation of independence of Kosovo was overwhelmingly conceptualized on the basis of ethnic markers (even though the very act of proclamation was called “illegal”), while the proclamation of independence of Montenegro was rather politically conceptualized.²¹ This may mean that the ethnic conceptualization of togetherness was in this particular case more appropriate than the territorial one or—let us put it this way—it seemed to be somewhat more “natural” and maybe more influential. One may also maintain that (b') there are some media which avoid qualifying people from ethnic-national viewpoints.

Axiology of the Out-Group

It looks obvious that the ethnic conceptualization of the group could be more easily used in order to convey some negative content with respect to the OUT-GROUP. Thus, for instance, comparing two possible expressions /Albanians will proclaim independence/ and /citizens of Kosovo will proclaim independence/ one sees that the former is more negative toward the agent of the act than the latter. In addition, the semiotic space of every culture is composed of some elements that “by themselves” express some negative content toward some other cultures or groups.²² In the Serbian language (the language of most Serbian speakers), the very lexeme /Albanian/, including the plural noun /Albanians/, definitely possesses negative connotations (not to speak

about the word *Šiptar*—*Šiptari* but it did not appear in our database). Hence, the expression /Albanians will declare independence/, which expresses the act negatively, as it would be perceived by most Serbs, only actualizes (and maybe strengthens) negative connotations of the very sign-vehicle /Albanians/. If one accepts such an assumption one has to accept that, as seen in Table 4, the very frequent usage of the plural ethnonym /Albanians/ in some media (*Večernje novosti* and *Politika*) reproduces—at least in most cases—some negative attitude towards the cultural unit “Albanians.” This is why, I would say, *Danas* and *Blic* (following some West European tendencies in the press) avoid this ethnonym. The same concerns the ethnonym /Montenegrins/, strangely absent, which does not possess such a negative attitude in most Serbian discourses.

Let us now turn to discuss how negative stereotypes of OUT-GROUPS could be petrified in a different way. In the previous sections, we were dealing with news where journalists informed the public about events and recorded the statements of the actors (overwhelmingly politicians) who are important for the society. There are, however, in our database a couple of pieces of reportage which always serve for journalists as potentiality to convey some content without explicating it themselves. Thus, whenever the media wants to reproduce some negative attitude toward any OUT-GROUP (and does not want to be accused of reinforcing this hatred), they can do so by publishing a feature story insofar as the feature story is a genre which informs readers about authentic places and authentic people (we are going to assume that journalists usually do not convey non-authentic events). “Authenticity” is the very fundament of reportage and thus it is perceived as a voice of common people, *vox populi*.

Let us now examine the content of some reports that were published in the period of June 2006 and February 2008. As expected, there were more reports during the Kosovo case (more than 10, most of them in *Večernje novosti*); as for the Montenegro case, there were only three.

Kosovo

There are many instances where the binary opposition of US (positive) and THEM (negative) was reproduced. The most obvious is the one found in *Večernje novosti* (by M. Ristović *Rampa za nasilje*):

- (8) Bujanovac [a place in Southern Serbia where Albanians live—M.Cz.]—**Peacefully and without panic** the Serbs in the South of Serbia are expecting the announced unilateral declaration of the independence of Kosovo and Metohija. They **carefully** follow the development of the situation in Kosmet, convinced that the state [of Serbia—M.Cz.] has to guard them at any price from possible **provocations of the Albanian separatists** (*Večernje novosti*, 16 February 2008, p. 6²³).

The IN-GROUP is presented as innocent, brave, and peaceful (see sign-vehicles referring to Serbs: /peacefully and without panic/ and /carefully/), while the OUT-GROUP in negative terms. The most important lexemes in expressing this attitude are /Albanian separatists/ and /provocations/, while the syntagm /protect from/ implicitly conveys that there exists a danger (thus protection is needed). This sort of discursive practice, quite apart from reproducing binary axiology, has a metonymical (synecdochic) potentiality as a receiver of the reportage could take these events as a metonymical representation of the whole IN-GROUP and the whole OUT-GROUP (needless to say that it petrifies both the IN-GROUP and OUT-GROUP as consistent and coherent collectives). Thus, for some receivers if Bujanovac (a Serbian village) is in danger, than—presumably—“Serbs in general” are in danger. In this case, the toponym, sign-vehicle /Bujanovac/ is (or rather: might be read as) a synecdoche of the whole nation. A similar construction could be found in the reportage entitled “A pledge cannot be abandoned!” (“*Zavet ne mogu oteti!*”) by Dragan Damjanović in *Večernje novosti*:

- (9) A powerful cold swept into Gračanica and the area between Sitnica and Lab yesterday. A frost arrived, and the cold penetrated one’s very soul. For today, the Albanians announced their theft of Kosmet. The morning service in the famous monastery is no longer being said, for the oldest Serbian habitation. Nuns and believers stop to cross themselves in front of the fresco of Saint Simon. A young man breaks free: “‘Again he wants us to scratch out our eyes!’” Everyone understands what he is thinking. A hundred years earlier, Milan Rakić had written, “‘Scratch out your eyes, beautiful Simon.’” Four years later, Kosovo was liberated after five centuries of slavery. (*Večernje novosti*, 17 February 2008, p. 8²⁴).

What makes this piece of reportage so influential (and this is a case seen very often when referring to coherent groups) is the fact that it constructs the binary axiology based on the matrix that confront (and

thus compare) US as “individuals” and THEM as “institutions.” The two represent antagonistic categories²⁵ and in the whole text are represented by: (a) US: /one youngster/, /some old people/, /a retired teacher Ratomir Ristić/, /Budimir Stanojević (81) from Topličani/, /Branko Dančetović (60), from the nearby village Laplje Selo/, etc.; (b) THEM: /Albanians/, /their protection/ [international community- M.Cz.], /state/. If one compares the domain of US with that of THEM, one can easily see that the conflict is also based on US (people) and THEM (institutions). A receiver always takes the side of people (thus this strategy is sometimes called *humanization*), not the part of institutions, which are perceived as non-human, cold, far from real life. This strategy overlaps in the actual Serbian case with general negative attitude not only towards Albanians and their possible state but also towards the West/ “international community”—very often presented within the public domain, i.e., the “institution.”

This is the reason why there are not any reports about “normal” and “common” Albanians. Even though one might imagine that they too have their problems, these problems are of no importance for Serbian journalists as they represent a coherent collective /Albanians/ who possess institutional properties with negative content encoded in a set of connotations (see above).

There is, however, one example in our database where “normal” Albanians were taken into account: specifically, in *Danas* by Vojkan Ristić “With no tensions and intensified safety measures” (“*Bez napetosti i pojačanih mera bezbednosti*”):

- (10) The **Serbs** from Ropotovo and Rabilug, who were walking in the direction of Vranje, maintain that “there is fear from a possible violence” but, refusing to give their names, say that “they do not intend to migrate from Kosovsko Pomoravlje.” The **Albanians** speak more openly. We are speaking with **a taxi-driver, Tefik Ibrahim** from **Gnjilane**. He describes the current situation in Gnjilane as pretty “chaotic” but this is not “because of any proclamation of independence,” but rather because of the fact that traffic, health and educational regulations are not respected (*Danas*, 16 February 2008, p. 226).

This sort of construction of discourse does not seem to reflect the expectations of a part of the Serbian readers who would prefer to find information about Serbs who were afraid of the foregoing proclamation of independence. This reportage, quite apart from *humanizing*

Albanians, does not spread fear about a danger that Serbs are faced but rather wants to present it as somewhat trivial.

Montenegro

If one compares the article by M. Novović in *Politika* entitled “Whole Village for Sale” (“*Celo selo na prodaju*”), one would notice that similar discursive strategies were employed.

- (15) **Saša Mitrović**, one of the younger inhabitants of Seoce, says that it is difficult for him as a youngster that he has to leave the native soil but he doesn’t want to—as a “Serb and Vasojevic”—to live **in foreign state**.—**The government of Montenegro** does not take **Serbian existence** here into consideration—he says (*Politika*, 1 June 2006, p. A1²⁷).

And again, US is represented by the following sign-vehicles: /Saša Mitrović/ and /Serbian existence/ (/srpsko življe/) while THEM is represented by: /foreign state/ and /government of Montenegro/. The former makes the category of US humanized and the latter makes the category of THEM de-humanized, institutional.

What is important to emphasize is the fact that, when confronting reportages on Montenegro with those of Kosovo, there is a difference in expressing a negative axiology vis-à-vis the OUT-GROUP. Namely, in the case of Montenegro, there were no explicit negative contexts for the ethnonym /Montenegrins/ as it was the case in respect to /Albanians/.

Boundaries of the In-Group

Finally, I will sketch some Serbian collective symbols that were employed during the two events and that “define” Serbian collective symbols. It is obvious what collective symbols are but in order to put it semiotically they need to be briefly characterized. Umberto Eco said “once society exists every function is automatically transformed into a sign of that function. This is possible once culture exists. But culture exists only because this is possible.”²⁸ Thus, society is a “place” where some *loci communes* “meet” and constitute collective ideologies (and thus identities); they are—semiotically speaking—units within the semiotic space that occupy naturalized positions among some highly emotional symbolic devices that create coherent narrations about the IN-GROUP

and the OUT-GROUPS. This “community of signs” helps to establish more or less homogenized discourses (for instance about the eternal unity of the group) that, in turn, homogenize groups themselves. Thus, collective symbols make a sort of “network” within the semiotic space that naturalize the communicative behavior of a prototype of the Serbs.

Any collective symbol, once stabilized as such, becomes a sign-vehicle not only possessing a meaning (denotation) but—based on conventionalized connotations—also its own “intra-narration.” Thus, for instance the Polish sign-vehicle */potoł/* not only denotes its English equivalent */Flood/* with its connotations (“danger,” “evacuation,” etc.) but also denotes the Polish-Swedish War in the seventeenth century, thus metaphorically comparing (and so conceptualizing) the enemy to enormous quantities of water. In this respect, connotations become more or less stable as “danger” remains in its very center while “evacuation”—understood as normal behavior—shifts to being called national betrayal.

Now, I am not going to decode these units, as they are well known,²⁹ but simply to present them, maintaining that they do not have any stable interpretation as there is no universal reader; their interpretation—even though it has a common level—differs from reader to reader.

Table 5. Collective symbols

	KOSOVO	MONTENEGRO
FIGURES	1. <i>/Karađorđe/</i> (11) 2. <i>/ancestors/</i> (5) 3. <i>/exiled/</i> (4) 4. <i>/sacred emperor, prince Lazar/</i> (3) 5. <i>/people concordant, unanimous/</i> (2) 6. <i>/knights of Kosovo/</i> (2) 7. <i>/endangered brothers/</i> (1) 8. – 9. – 10. <i>/great grandfathers/</i> (1) 11. –	1. – 2. <i>/ancestors/</i> (1) 3. – 4. – 5. – 6. – 7. <i>/endangered /</i> (1) 8. <i>/fathers/</i> (1) 9. <i>/grandfathers/</i> (1) 10. <i>/great grandfathers/</i> (1) 11. <i>/foreigner for a ruler/</i> (1)

	KOSOVO	MONTENEGRO
EVENTS	1. /to fight, fight/ (46) 2. /defend, defense/ (28) 3. /crime/ (12) 4. /to bombard, bombardment/ (11) 5. /endurance/ (8) 6. /battle/ (5) 7. /uprising/ (3) 8. /pledge/ (3) 9. /genocide of the Serbian nation/ (2) 10. /wandering/ (1) 11. – 12. – 13. /exodus/ (1)	1. /to fight, fight/ (4) 2. – 3. /crime/ (6) 4. – 5. /endurance/ (3) 6. /battle/ (2) 7. – 8. – 9. – 10. /endless wandering/ (1) 11. /brother/ (5) 12. /tread identity/ (1) 13. /exodus/ (1)
PLACES	1. /house, home/ (48) 2. /centuries/ [plural noun] (18) 3. /sacredness/ (10) 4. /hearth and home/ (6) 5. /roots/ (4) 6. /soil/ (4) 7. /homeland/ (/otadžbina/) (4) 8. – /Kosovo Polje/ (3) 9. – /Gazimestan/ (2) 10. /native soil/ (1) 11. /cradle/ (2) 12. – 13. – 14. –	1. /house, home/ (6) 2. /centuries/ (3) 3. – 4. /hearth and home/ (4) 5. /roots/ (1) 6. – 7. – 8. – 9. – 10. /native soil/ (1) 11. – 12. /homeland/ (/domovina/) (1) 13. /each on his own/ (svoji na svome) (1) 14. /ancient fatherland/ (dedovina) (1)

	KOSOVO	MONTENEGRO
SYNDROMES	1. /fear/ (24) 2. /enclave/ (13) 3. /threat, menace/ (11) 4. /injustice/ (10) 5. /siege/ (3) 6. /isolation/ (1) 7. /fate of exile/ (1) 8. /endangered Serbian her- itage/ (1) 9. –	1. /fear/ (1) 2. – 3. /threat, menace/ (1) 4. /injustice/ (1) 5. – 6. – 7. – 8. – 9. /endangered existence/

Again, as we can see, there are crucial differences both in the content and intensity of the representation of collective symbols. If one goes through “Figures,” one notices that the case of Kosovo was conceptualized throughout historical figures that structure the mythological narratives of the cultural unit “Kosovo”: /prince/ or /emperor Lazar/, /*Karađorđel*/, /knights of Kosovo/. There are also some historical figures that are not specified but have the form of masculine members of the family: /ancestors/ (/precil/) and /great grandfathers/ (/pradedovi/); in this case the Montenegrin case is more heterogeneous as we have three sign-vehicles of this semantic unit, namely: /great grandfathers/ (with the Montenegrin pronunciation /pradedovi/) as well as /fathers/ (/očevil/) and /grandfathers/ (with the Montenegrin pronunciation /đedovi/). Unspecified masculine members of family, and notably as plural nouns, play an important, metonymically, synecdochically, structured, role of the very model of culture and the link coupling the past and the present times in Serbian (and also Montenegrin) mythologies. One may find it unexpected, but the most frequent figure (11 records) is /*Karađorđel*/ but not, as expected, /prince or emperor Lazar/. Both figures are symbols of fighting, war and inflexibility in Serbian culture. On the other hand, in the Montenegro case there are no stabilized figures of Montenegrin and Serbian mythology such as the royal dynasty of Petrović or the most prominent members of the dynasty: Petar I Petrović Njegoš or King Nikola (as one can easily assume, they were the most important figures employed by both the followers of the idea of independence and the opponents of the idea).

The differences between the case of Kosovo and the Montenegrin case are more visible when we compare “Events.” The most frequent sign-vehicles employed in the case of Kosovo are verbs and nominalizations that express actions directed into both defense and fighting (74 for Kosovo and 4 for Montenegro). Note that the very lexeme of /battle/ (*/bitka/*) is one of the most crucial units within the semantic field of /Kosovo/ (see the historically stable syntagm “*Kosovska bitka*”).

The category of “Places” is very much diversified as well (note that places were not only considered literally but also figuratively, for instance the plural noun /centuries/ (*/veкови/*) denotes in some conventionalized context not only time but also place). For instance, in the case of Kosovo, the sign-vehicle /bombardment/, as a newly established symbol of victimization and suffering of the Serbian nation, is very frequent while, in the Montenegrin case, it does not exist. There are not, in this case, any concrete places that are strongly emotional toponyms in terms of their connotations from the province of Kosovo (*/Gazimestan/* or */Kosovo Polje/*). What makes, on the other hand, the two cases similar is the high frequency of the very lexeme /home/house/ (*/kuća/*) which has very strong axiological associations. In our database, the lexeme was employed (1) as a “house/home” of Serbs who are afraid of Albanians; (2) metonymically: “home” represents “homeland” (as in our database: “Serbian homes in Kosovo represents the whole Serbian state”).

Summary

The research of discursive practices in the media (which, as we see above, are slightly different in terms of form and content) during the two important events in the history of Serbia show undoubtedly that Serbian culture, understood here as a semiotic space, possesses a very precise and stable linguistic repertoire when referring to “Montenegro” and “Kosovo.” Both units, apart from having well-established cultural and axiological connotations, enter into specific discursive forms and thereby actualize their mythological meanings, playing an important role in Serbian national imagery. The independence of Montenegro and Kosovo made Serbian semiotic space more sensitive to express—in various ways—possessiveness towards the two cultural units. As this research proves, possessiveness, considered as a cultural value and the result of a semiotic establishment, is something that is encoded (explicitly or implicitly) in many linguistic devices. The semiotic

functioning of such linguistic items petrify in the Serbian communicative behavior the cognition that “Montenegro” and “Kosovo” are indeed cultural units that are subordinated to the Serbian culture. However, the possessiveness towards “Montenegro” is far less expressed than that of “Kosovo.” The same thing happens when one compares the structure of discourses when referring to the very act of the proclamation of independence. While the case of Montenegro is conceptualized by the rhetoric of a legal political act, the case of Kosovo was predominantly perceived throughout as illegality, falseness, etc. Another device that has been used by the media is the strong polarization of the OUT-GROUP. Some of these strategies for denoting collectives were using a political domain (citizens), whereas the other by the ethnic-national domain (ethnonyms); and both disclose ideological motivations. In addition, well-established cultural symbols were strengthening the boundaries of the Serbian collective space.

The research shows that the cultural units “Montenegro” and “Kosovo” are nowadays perceived differently by the Serbian media, and thus by the whole culture. While a stronger subjectivity (and thus “semiotic independence”) is assigned to the former, so that possessiveness is weaker, the latter has very weak subjectivity and is very much more subordinated to and incorporated into the Serbian cultural space. This is probably due to the fact that, in Montenegro, the referendum took place recently and was treated as a legal procedure by the Serbian government, whereas the case of Kosovo was resolved by military intervention in Yugoslavia (1999) and the presence of international institutions (both factors strengthening Serbian victimization myths). There is, however, another explanation one might think of. It is obvious that the cultural unit “Kosovo” plays a much more important role in the Serbian mythological narratives than that of “Montenegro.” It is in the very center of the imagination of Serbian culture and, as this research proves, it will remain so; even though Kosovo will not be politically a part of Serbia, it will still be semiotically a part of Serbia.

Notes

- ¹ When giving original Serbian words I use italics, while with English, Polish and French words or translations I use roman.
- ² Roger Fowler, *Language in the News: Discourse and Ideology in the Press* (London: Routledge, 1991).
- ³ Umberto Eco, *A Theory of Semiotics* (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1976), p. 87.
- ⁴ There is a famous example of presupposition that was a subject of discussions between Frege, Russel and Strawson. The utterance *The King of France is wise* presupposes that *There is a present King of France*. Thus we may equally say that *The Prime Minister of Kosovo ought to be convicted* presupposes that *There is a present Prime Minister of Kosovo*, and, in addition, that *There is a unit that is called /Kosovo/*.
- ⁵ Stephen C. Levinson, *Pragmatics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), pp. 167–225.
- ⁶ *ibid.*, p. 179.
- ⁷ See Maciej Czerwiński, *Semioza końca, czyli o „integracji” i „dezintegracji” w dyskursach przed czarnogórskim referendum niepodległościowym*, ed. Maria Dąbrowska-Partyka, *Kultury słowiańskie Kultury słowiańskie między postkomunizmem i postmodernizmem* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, 2009), pp. 267–294.
- ⁸ Two times */kosovaril/*: one ironically and one as a quotation of the Dutch press.
- ⁹ *Danas* employs “*albanski separatisti*” in quotation marks.
- ¹⁰ See: */Osamostaljenje/, /osamostaliti se/, /samostalnost Crne Gore/*.
- ¹¹ One might include into this set of expressions also metonymical, i.e., synecdochic, sign-vehicle */Priština/ (pars pro toto—city for state)*.
- ¹² There is a lot of literature on Western and Eastern type of nations but what is important to say is that they—even though they are scholarly—petrify some Western axiology towards East. In addition, it looks pretty obvious to me that no European nation is completely political and no European nation is completely ethnic. Even the French nation, that has always served as an example of political one (and has indeed political conceptualizations in many linguistic items, for instance the very word */nation/*), is not an only-political complex. It would be better to say that in most dominant discourses political semiosis has been established whereas there are still discourses that oppose such conceptualization (it suffice to get through speeches of the present French president or the motto of Front National: “*La France, Aimez-la ou quittez-la!*”).
- ¹³ Serbian: “*Što se radikala tiče, građani Crne Gore biće podeljeni u dve grupe. Crnogorce, koji će u Srbiji biti stranci, i Srbe iz Crne Gore, koji neće biti stranci, i koji će, ako budu tražili manjinska prava, imati našu podršku. Što se mene tiče, saradnju sa crnogorskom vlašću treba svesti*

na najmanju, a saradnju sa Srbima u Crnoj Gori - povećati na najveću meru – rekao je Nikolić.”

- ¹⁴ Serbian: “Vlada Republike Srbije i ovom odlukom potvrđuje da su Srbi i svi građani Autonomne Pokrajine Kosovo i Metohija koji priznaju državu Srbiju u potpunosti punopravni i ravnopravni građani Republike Srbije”).
- ¹⁵ Serbian: “Vlada će učiniti sve da se njeno prisustvo na KiM, kao sastavnom delu Srbije, a u skladu s međunarodnim poretom i Ustavom Srbije, proširi, osnaži, ojača, a život **Srba i svih građana KiM lojalnih Srbiji** učini normalnim - naglasio je Kotunia.”
- ¹⁶ Serbian: “**Svi građani koji su lojalni** i koji poštuju postojeći pravni poredak u potpunosti su ravnopravni. **Ti građani koji poštuju pravo** imaju pravo i da ne priznaju nelegalne akte, što znači da ne priznaju nepravdu, i to je potpuno logično.”
- ¹⁷ Serbian: “**Građanima Kosova koji su lojalni Srbiji** treba pomagati i država bi morala da angažuje resurse da se kupi što više imovine na Kosovu (...)—kazao je Nikolić.”
- ¹⁸ Serbian: “Deklaracija kojom se Kosovo proglašava nezavisnom i suverenom državom sadržaće delove preambule predloga novog ustava Kosova u kojem se navodi da je Kosovo država svih njenih građana.”
- ¹⁹ Serbian: “Premijer Srbije Vojislav Koštunica istakao je juče da Srbija mora jedinstvenom državnom i nacionalnom politikom da obezbedi siguran i normalan život za sve građane Kosova i Metohije koji poštuju državu Srbiju.”
- ²⁰ In addition, the term /Crnogorci/ is in most cases (7 out of 8) used as direct or indirect quotation.
- ²¹ Needless to say that this corresponds to legal code which was diversifying the Kosovo case from the Montenegro case when referring to the political status of the province (“*pokrajina*”) and republic (“*republika*”).
- ²² Needless to say that negative (or positive) attitudes towards OUT-GROUPS are not necessary stable component of semantic property. One could easily imagine that for instance negative attitudes of Poles towards Germans are changing and thus the very word /*Niemcy*/ (/Germans/) has less negative connotations that it used to have, at least for most of Polish speakers.
- ²³ Serbian: “**BUJANOVAC**—Smireno i bez panike, Srbi na jugu centralne Srbije dočekuju najavljeno jednostrano proglašenje nezavisnosti Kosova i Metohije. Pomno prate razvoj situacije na Kosmetu, uvereni da država po svaku cenu mora da ih zaštititi od eventualnih provokacija albanskih separatista.”
- ²⁴ Serbian: “Jaka studen spopala juče Gračanicu i prostor između Sitnice i Laba. Mraz stegao, a hladno i u duši. Za danas **Albanci najavili otimanje Kosmeta**. Jutarnja služba u znamenitom manastiru više je moleban, za **najstariju srpsku postojbinu**. Monahinje i vernici zastaju, krste se i ispred freske svete Simonide. Jednom mladiću se ote: ‘**Opet hoće oči da nam kopaju**’! Svi razumeše na šta misli. Pre ravno sto godina Milan

Rakić je ovde napisao: 'Iskopaše ti oči, lepa Simonido...' Četiri godine kasnije Kosovo je oslobođeno posle pet vekova ropstva."

²⁵ See Tomasz Piekot, *Prywatny i publiczny punkt widzenia w dyskursie wiadomości dziennikarskich*, [in:] *Punkt widzenia w tekście i w dyskursie*, ed. Jerzy Bartmiński (Lublin: UMCS, 2004), pp. 127–146.

²⁶ Serbian: "‘**Srbi** iz Ropotova i Raniluga koji su kretali prema Vranju tvrde da ‘postoji strah od mogućeg nasilja’, ali odbijajući da kažu svoja imena govore da ‘nemaju nameru da se iseljavaju iz Kosovskog pomoravlja’. **Albanci** su raspoloženi za razgovor. Razgovaramo s **taksistom Tefikom Ibrahimijem iz Gnjilana**. On situaciju u Gnjilanu opisuje kao poprilično ‘haotičnu’, ali ne ‘zbog najavljenog proglašenja nezavisnosti’, već zbog činjenice da se ne poštuju propisi u saobraćaju, zdravlju, obrazovanju.”

²⁷ Serbian: "‘**Saša Mitrović**, jedan od mlađih stanovnika Seoca, kaže da mu je teško što kao mlad čovek mora da napusti rodnu grudu, ali ne želi da ‘kao Srbin i Vasojević’ živi **u stranoj državi**.—**Vlada Crne Gore** uopšte ne vodi računa o ovdašnjem **srpskom življu**—smatra Mitrović.”

²⁸ Eco, *A Theory of Semiotics* [NOTE 3], p. 24.

²⁹ A lot of work on Serbian collective symbols has been done by Ivan Čolović. See, in particular, his *The Politics of Symbol in Serbia*, trans. from Serbian by Celia Hawkesworth (London: Hurst, 2002).

Kosovo in Serbian Politics since Milošević

Hilde Katrine Haug

Dear citizens of Serbia! What is Kosovo? Where is Kosovo? Whose is Kosovo? Is there anyone among us who is not from Kosovo? Is there anyone among us who thinks that Kosovo does not belong to us? Kosovo—that's Serbia's first name. Kosovo belongs to Serbia. Kosovo belongs to the Serbian people. That's how it has been forever. That's how it's going to be forever. (Vojislav Koštunica, from speech 21 February)¹

Premier Koštunica delivered his emotional speech on Kosovo on 21 February 2008 to approximately 200,000-300,000 Serbs who had ventured onto the streets of Belgrade to protest the Declaration of Independence (UDI) by Kosovo on 17 February. The event was organized by the Serbian Government. The Democratic Party of Serbia (DSS), New Serbia (NS) and the Serbian Radical Party (SRS), the Nationalist/Patriotic bloc in Serbia, all participated, while the Democratic Party (DS) abstained from the event. It nevertheless attracted support from a broad layer of the population. While the event was meant to demonstrate Serbian unity over its rejection of Kosovo's independence, the main parties of the liberal/pro-European bloc came to view it as a political rally for the nationalists, and Serbian president Boris Tadić went on a state-visit to Romania that day. This event was naturally of a special nature and sparked by the high emotions rendered by the Kosovo unilateral declaration of independence (UDI) only four days before. Nevertheless, it is illustrative of the extent to which the Kosovo question continues to influence Serbian Politics eight years after the ousting of Milošević from power on 5 October 2000, and nine years after the NATO intervention in Kosovo. The event furthermore points to the politicization of Kosovo in Serbian politics, and the extent to which it has been used in inter-party political struggles.

Kosovo is not a new concern for Serbian politicians and intellectuals and is a question that has often made a deep, direct impact on the politics in Belgrade. Kosovo holds a great symbolic political significance for those preoccupied with the Serbian national question. It was

a key issue in Slobodan Milošević's rise to power, and in Dušan Janjić's words, for Milošević, "the most precious Serbian word [Kosovo] was synonymous with his success and fall."² The NATO intervention and the removal of Milošević the following year altered the circumstances of Belgrade's involvement in Kosovo. The question of Kosovo's status has continued to influence Serbia's political development, and has formed part of a larger question of what direction Serbia would move in after Milošević. Finding a settlement to the question of Kosovo's status has also formed part of the broader issue of how to resolve the constitutional arrangement and unsettled border questions within the remaining parts of the Yugoslav federation. Serbia's continuing engagement with the Kosovo question has had a considerable impact on its relations with neighboring states and the international community. Kosovo's significance goes beyond the matter itself, and it also pinpoints the state of nationalist thinking in Serbia, and the level to which there has, or has not, been a value transformation in Serbian society.

The direct influence of the Kosovo status question on internal Serbian political dynamics has nevertheless varied. During the first post-Milošević years, Kosovo formed just one of many challenges, and other issues dominated the political field in Serbia much more forcefully. The impact of Kosovo intensified after the 2004 riots and after the ensuing effort to find a settlement to the status question was stepped up by the International Community in late 2005. Gradually, this issue has come to dominate and almost cripple the political agenda in Serbia, and to some extent, it has also been used by Serbian politicians to avoid dealing with the greater challenges facing Serbian society.

The Political Landscape and Kosovo after Milošević

The influence of Kosovo on the Serbian political landscape must be seen in the wider political context of Serbian politics after Milošević. Current problems have their roots in policies originally implemented during Milošević's time in power, and the structures and channels used by Belgrade to maintain their influence in Kosovo were inherited from the Milošević era. Eight years after his removal from power on 5 October 2000, it has become obvious that this event did not necessarily mark the beginning of the new future that many Serbs had expected, nor the end of the nationalist ideas that had formed the basis and support for Milošević's project. The new DOS coalition, which had been put together under strong pressure from the international com-

munity, Otpor, and other domestic civil society actors, was a conglomerate with varying political interests and political ideas, as well as divergent thoughts about how to tackle the challenges facing them. Not all the parties which were opposed to Milošević were reform-oriented, as sometimes naïvely assumed by international actors, and not all were equally keen to deal with the Milošević legacy. These divergences made it difficult for the DOS coalition to purge the government apparatus, including the Army and Security Services of people who had been loyal to Milošević. The previous security structures remained intact and many of the powerful cronies of Milošević retained influence in Serbian politics. Efforts to reform the judiciary were opposed by some forces within the DOS coalition, particularly the DSS, led by Koštunica, and cooperation with the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) was also obstructed. On a practical level, the DOS coalition took over an economy devastated by years of corruption and mismanagement that had left large parts of the Serbian population impoverished and disillusioned. All these challenges initially attracted greater focus from the new government than the Kosovo question. Nevertheless, lack of a solution to the Kosovo question and the way in which it has become an issue used by different parties for political gains, has meant that Kosovo has influenced Belgrade's actions on all these other issues tremendously.

The political struggle between Zoran Đinđić and Vojislav Koštunica

One of the main features of post-Milošević Serbian politics has been the long lasting antagonistic relation between Vojislav Koštunica's party DSS and the Democratic Party (DS), led initially by Zoran Đinđić. Almost immediately after coming to power, the two party leaders became entangled in a bitter struggle related in part to clashing personalities, but also rooted in an on-going struggle over political values and visions for Serbia's future. While Đinđić's DS attempted to portray itself as a pro-Western modernizing party, at the centre-left end of the political scale, Koštunica's DSS tended towards the center-right of the political spectrum. His party was smaller, to a large extent identified with Koštunica's persona, and preoccupied with defending conservative national values. Kosovo was not a direct cause of the struggle between the DS and DSS leaders. However, their different outlooks, values, and emphasis on the national question vis-à-vis modernization

would have an important impact on how they approached the question of Kosovo.

Koštunica's political discourse has to a large extent been colored by his focus on Serbian national identity and values, and he has pointed to the national question as a key point in the divergence leading the DSS to break away from the DS in 1992. Koštunica has argued that the "Serbian question in Yugoslavia was not a question concerning political democracy or economic equality, but a question concerning the national existence of the Serbian People." The DSS statement further stressed that for the DS, "the national question practically did not exist," and if so, it was "treated according to the thesis of the special responsibility of the Serbian nation as the greatest defenders of Yugoslavia."³ Koštunica has not promoted Milošević's rule or his methods, and when Koštunica was chosen by the DOS coalition as its candidate to contest the 2000 elections, it was his lack of active engagement in politics during the Milošević years, combined with his conservative, nationalist outlook, that made him a suitable candidate.⁴ Koštunica primarily targeted Milošević failure to maintain Serbian territorial integrity, for having placed Serbian national interests in a bad light internationally, and for having (mis)used Serbian national ideals for his own power-related ambitions. Nonetheless, much of Koštunica's long-term territorial program for Serbia has been similar to that of Milošević. Koštunica made a number of statements concerning Kosovo, and Republika Srpska in the 1990s that clearly exposed his nationalist views, and Koštunica's engagement with Kosovo has been a long-term and often deeply felt one. Koštunica's rhetoric has been vociferously anti-Nato and anti-Western, and his position on Kosovo became more clearly articulated following the 1999 NATO bombing. After the fall of Milošević, many former SPS supporters in Kosovo migrated to the DSS. This contributed to reinforcing the DSS's focus on national and nationalist issues including an uncompromising position on Kosovo. However, the DSS was originally identified with the "democratic" camp of Serbian politics, now most often referred to as the pro-European/liberal bloc, and only gradually has it come to be identified clearly with the nationalist/patriotic camp.⁵

Initially, Kosovo was an issue with which Đinđić avoided direct engagement, at least in public. The DS wanted to shift the focus away from Milošević-style obsession with nationalist issues, and to take Serbia out of the isolation into which his politics had led it. The DS's focus was on European rapprochement as well as on the democratiza-

tion and modernization of Serbian society. Đinđić was more cooperative on turning over indictees to the ICTY and it was he who eventually facilitated the hand-over of Milošević to The Hague. The DS's lack of public engagement with Kosovo left the DS vulnerable to accusations from the opposition of a lack of attention to national issues as well as of lack of patriotism. Hence, Đinđić was often apprehensive about challenging nationalist policies.⁶ This also stalled the reform process, which did not develop at the pace that many Serbs had expected. Đinđić did not, however, remain oblivious to the issue of Kosovo's status, and from 2001, he engaged himself considerably behind the scenes with this matter. He pursued two simultaneous strategies: the official DOS approach toward Kosovo and the negotiations with the international society were left in the hands of Nebojša Čović who was appointed head of the Coordination Center for Kosovo in August 2001. According to one commentator, Đinđić simultaneously wanted to encourage a greater link to, and dependency of the Kosovan economy on Belgrade, and he was also encouraged to establish such links by financial interests in Belgrade, which wished to increase economic cooperation with Priština.⁷

Policy Development on Kosovo in Belgrade 2000–2004

When it came to power, the new DOS coalition was faced with a *de facto* absence of (Yugoslav) control over the territory of Kosovo. The implementation of UNSC Resolution 1244 following the NATO intervention placed Kosovo under an interim administration of the international community, while its further status remained unsettled. The new circumstances left Belgrade with little direct maneuvering space in Kosovo. Serbia has nonetheless continued to insist on its sovereignty in Kosovo, and has tended to view the reference in Resolution 1244 to the "sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia" as a guarantee of its continued claim to Kosovo, even after the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia had ceased to exist.

During the first four years after Milošević was ousted from his offices, Belgrade's policy on Kosovo was primarily oriented toward hindering any movement in the negotiations over status at a time when the Serbian bargaining position was at its weakest. Consequently, Kosovo was treated largely on an ad hoc basis, and Belgrade's policy sought, above all, to prevent any progress toward a solution that would grant sovereignty to Priština and the Kosovar Albanians. This clashed considerably with the aspirations of the Kosovar Albanians, whose only

acceptable end game after 1999 was independence. During these years, the International Community focused on building up institutions, and on creating “standards” in Kosovo, rather than on dealing with the question of status. In April 2001, UNMIK propagated a draft for the “Constitutional framework for Provisional Self-Government in Kosovo,” which would enable locals to hold parliamentary elections. UNMIK also appointed a president and launched Provisional Institutions of Self-Government (PISG). At the time, Belgrade granted a somewhat hesitant encouragement to the participation of Kosovo Serbs in the PISG, including participation in local elections and Kosovo elections as well as inclusion in the Kosovo government. In 2002, the “standards before status” slogan was launched by the then UNMIK head Michael Steiner, and until the 2004 unrest broke out, the international community focused largely on its determined goal of portraying Kosovo as a multinational community. Such multinationalism was to a large extent an illusion in a society characterized by segregation and colored by deep mutual suspicion and intimidation.

Although there has been considerable dissent among the Belgrade elites about how to approach the question of Kosovo, or about how much priority they were willing to put on this issue, there has also been consensus on the broad lines of their approach to the Kosovo status question. Almost without exception, Belgrade has agreed that a solution to Kosovo’s status should be found within a wider Serbian context. Secondly, Belgrade has been willing to keep all other options open, except for independence. Most of the Serbian leaders have advocated an arrangement with considerable autonomy for Kosovo within Serbia, and for the Serbs in Kosovo. Cantonization, federalization and decentralization, have all been presented as variations on the theme of autonomy. Different proposals based on some form of “functional separation” and geographical partition, have also held resonance in Belgrade, although political leaders have been more careful in expressing such ambitions in public.⁸

As Kosovo largely came outside the sphere of Serbian politics, Belgrade has attempted to retain its influence in Kosovo by championing the rights of local Serbs. Belgrade has expected Kosovo’s Serbs to display full loyalty to policies primarily aimed at strengthening Belgrade’s bargaining position in possible future status talks. Belgrade’s engagement in Kosovo has often lacked sensitivity to the needs of the Serb population in Kosovo, and at times directly increased the threat to their future existence and security in Kosovo. Belgrade has simulta-

neously pursued two main strategies in their engagement in Kosovo and with the Kosovo-Serbs: one has placed emphasis on maintaining ethnic segregation/partition. This also served as an instrument to maintain Belgrade's control and assure that loyalty from the Kosovar Serbs goes to Belgrade rather than Priština. In this way, Belgrade has also sought to hinder the consolidation of a Kosovar Albanian state and government structures. Considerable pressure has been applied by Belgrade on the Kosovar Serbs to abstain from cooperating with the Kosovar-Albanians or from participating in the institutional structures developed since 1999. Belgrade's main tool here has been the build-up and continuous strengthening of parallel Serbian structures. Another, more controversial strategy, has aimed at creating a *de facto* territorial partition or the formation of two separate Serbian and Albanian entities. This has primarily been promoted in the more compact Serb-inhabited communities north of the River Ibar and has aimed at some form of attachment of Kosovo-Serb communities to the Republic of Serbia. This has been a supplementary, rather than a substitute strategy.

The Coordination Center for Kosovo (CCK) has been Belgrade's official institution to maintain its influence in Kosovo. While the CCK was presented as an administrative entity, it clearly has a political profile. Originally, the main CCK membership consisted of DSS and SPS affiliates. Through their continued presence, and by providing financial assistance for the parallel structures, the various CCK offices have become the prolonged arm of Belgrade's interests in Kosovo. In addition to looking after Kosovar Serb interests, these offices have handled the Serbian government's engagement with the international community. Other interest groups, most notably the Serbian National Council (SNC) and the coalition Povratak (Return) have also claimed to represent Kosovar Serbian interests. The SNC's northern branch has retained close ties to the DSS and has pursued a hard-line nationalist agenda. It has maintained strong control over the Kosovar Serb population in the northern part of Kosovo, often by use of intimidation. Many of the main figures hold parallel membership in both CCK and the SNC, and have had strong DSS connections.

Nebojša Čović and the CCK

Serbian Deputy Prime Minister and leader of the Democratic Alternative (DA), Nebojša Čović, was appointed leader of the CCK in August 2001. Kosovo was hardly a popular portfolio at this time, and was

shunned by most Belgrade ministers. However, Čović had been lauded for his mediation in the Preševo Valley, and had made excellent use of his position, consequently managing to dominate Belgrade's policy in Kosovo. Nebojša Čović's strategy was to talk eloquently with the international community, while at the same time retaining tight control over the Kosovar Serbs through the CCK by providing funding for the continuous build-up of parallel Serbian structures. He adopted the position that institutionalizing cooperation with UNMIK might serve to win Belgrade increased influence in Kosovo more effectively than pure obstruction. Čović carefully attempted to steer clear of aligning himself too closely with either Đinđić or Koštunica. Čović's relationship with Đinđić remained tense, and he was initially closer to Koštunica. For the (failed) 2002 Serbian elections, Čović chose to back Koštunica's candidacy. Čović clearly also had his own political ambitions, and soon fell out of favor with Koštunica who sought to undermine the ambitious Čović in Belgrade, and within the CCK. This also contributed to strengthening the powers of the more hard-line elements in the SNC north of the River Ibar. In a proposal presented by Čović August 2001, to a large extent inspired by the writings of Branimir Krstić,⁹ he insisted that Kosovo remain a part of the Serbian state. He advocated the creation of two entities, a Serbian and an ethnic Albanian one, and alluded to the model provided by Bosnia-Herzegovina.¹⁰ The principal aims would be the establishment of a system based on a form of cantonization where Kosovar Serbs would have self-rule within their communities. He advocated a model whereby Serbs would control 30% of Kosovo's territories, which would be divided into five cantons. The international community viewed the proposal as a prelude to partition and the creation of new state borders and feared that it would mean the further destabilization of Kosovo. Therefore, the international community and Kosovar Albanians alike rejected it.¹¹ Čović's attempt to encourage the participation of Kosovar Serbs in the November 2001 Kosovo elections, combined with his insistence on keeping a hard grip on the CCK and the Kosovo-Serbs, earned him considerable unpopularity among key Kosovar Serb representatives including SNC president Milan Ivanović and vice-president Marko Jakšić in North Mitrovica. These two instead put pressure on the Kosovar Serbs to abstain from such participation.

Đinđić and the Question of Kosovo

By late 2002, Đinđić started to advocate a more speedy process to find a solution to the Kosovo question. His move was to a large extent based on the recognition that Serbia's path towards greater EU integration without addressing the Kosovo question would be difficult. In March 2003, Đinđić publicly launched a political initiative to discuss Kosovo's status, stating that independence would no longer remain a taboo theme.¹² This initiative came as a surprise both to Priština and the international community. According to then Slovenian Ambassador Borut Šuklje, Đinđić insisted on the fact that it was time to have an entirely open discussion on the status of Kosovo, and that the Serbs needed to demand the provisions they were guaranteed under Resolution 1244.¹³ The main importance of Đinđić's proposal was the fact that it broke with the thus far favored Belgrade policy of obstructing the movement towards status talks. Đinđić advocated a federal solution where the Serbian communities would be recognized as a constituent people and have close relations to Serbia.¹⁴ Kosovo would be given broad autonomy but remain within the union of Serbia and Montenegro. In this, Janjić points out, Đinđić did not succeed in leaving behind Belgrade's obsession with territorial demarcation.¹⁵ Like Čović's proposal two years earlier, Đinđić also suggested a solution broadly modeled on the Dayton agreement in Bosnia.¹⁶ He also called for the return of MUP and Serbian security and armed forces (VJ) to Kosovo in line with the provisions of the 1244 Resolution. Đinđić drew the conclusion that if a federal solution did not work out, then partition should be considered as the alternative. Priština turned down his proposal for starting dialogue between Priština and Belgrade. Đinđić's proposal had been circulated in an internal government document already at the end of 2002. While it was positively received by Nebojša Čović and Dobrica Ćosić, who were both supporters of partition, Koštunica reacted rather negatively. He could not see any reason to hurry the process, and argued that the present delaying strategy was working just fine, thus seeing no reason to alter it. Referring to the case of Cyprus he argued that it would still take a long time to find a solution to the Kosovo status question.¹⁷ All in all, while Đinđić was ready to put the partition option on the table, Koštunica was much less eager to front this option publicly, as this would indicate a still unpopular willingness to give up most parts of Kosovo.

Đinđić's initiative came to a halt when he was assassinated shortly after it was launched. Zoran Živković who took over as prime minister, focused primarily on the challenges of organized crime, which, as Đinđić's death had showed, was suffocating political life in Belgrade and making it increasingly unstable. In late 2003, the DOS government collapsed and new parliamentary elections were held. A sequence of presidential elections failed to attract the necessary 50% support to become valid. Furthermore when the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia was replaced by the state union of Serbia-Montenegro, the job of president was granted to Svetozar Marović from Montenegro. Consequently, Koštunica was out of a job. With regards to Kosovo, the unrest in 2004 ensured that the Kosovo question came to the forefront of the political agenda in Belgrade, and also served to alter the dynamic in Belgrade's approach to this question.

2004–2006: Changing Dynamics in Belgrade Policies over Kosovo

The 17–18 March violence throughout Kosovo in 2004, worked as a catalyst for both the international community and for Serbian political actors. The unrest made Kosovo the center of a more focused approach on the part of the international community, and in July 2004, Kai Eide, the Special Envoy of the UN Secretary-General in Kosovo, recommended moving toward finding a more permanent solution, and the commencement of more formalized talks over the status question.¹⁸ The 17–18 March violence changed the dynamic in the relations between Belgrade, Priština, and the international community. Serious question were raised concerning the Kosovar Albanians' maturity, preparedness for increased self-rule, and willingness to ensure a safe and secure environment for its minorities. One important consequence was a gradual shift of focus to decentralization and a simultaneous loss of confidence in the belief that the strengthening of central Kosovo institutions could secure the safety for the minorities. International perception changed and the international community became increasingly sympathetic toward the Serbs, at least temporarily. The violent incidents in March paradoxically raised a renewed hope in Belgrade concerning Serbia's ability to exert influence in Kosovo, and the newfound sympathy boosted its confidence. While the international community sought to secure the safety for Kosovar Serbs by advocating decentralization, a territorially founded solution was increasingly presented by

Belgrade as the best way to guarantee security to Kosovar Serbs. The mid-March events helped the political elites in Belgrade to sell this idea to the Serbian public. Nevertheless, they did endorse the decentralization rhetoric, as it was also useful for the purpose of achieving concessions that could be beneficial to Belgrade's aims of securing more Serbian influence in Kosovo.

In the beginning of March 2004, and only a few weeks prior to the outbreak of unrest in Kosovo, Koštunica became prime minister for a minority government. Equally important, the ultranationalist SRS considerably strengthen its electoral appeal, achieving 27% of the votes and 82 out of 250 seats. Both these factors had important consequences for Belgrade's approach to the Kosovo question, and led to a considerable strengthening of the nationalist agenda within the Serbian political body. Another important factor which contributed to the changing political dynamics in Belgrade was the election of Boris Tadić from the DS to the Serbian presidency in June 2004. Tadić's victory was expected to boost the country's stalled reform initiatives and help stabilize the overall political situation. With the DS leader in the president's chair and the DSS in charge of the prime minister's office, the old DS/DSS conflict soon surfaced again. Speculations that the DS would join the government continued throughout 2004 and 2005, but Koštunica chose to steer his minority government without the DS, relying instead on the tacit support of the SPS, though not as part of the government. The increased support of the nationalist SRS, combined with Koštunica's refusal to include the DS in the government, left his minority government in a precarious position, where he attempted to balance between the DS and the SRS, flirting with both, but attempting not to steer too close to either. Koštunica started to drift closer to the nationalist bloc within an increasingly polarized Serbian political landscape, and the direct influence of Kosovo on Serbian politics also started to increase markedly. Kosovo became an important issue in the, sometimes uneasy, power sharing arrangement between the new president and Prime Minister Koštunica.

Koštunica's plan for Kosovo

In his pre-inaugural speech in March 2004, Koštunica spelled out his position on Kosovo. He argued "Substantial autonomy for the Serb population in Kosovo includes territorial autonomy, the division of Kosovo into entities or the cantonization of Kosovo-Metohija, and a

corresponding cultural and personal autonomy.”¹⁹ The terminology applied was rather vague and in an interview with the weekly magazine NIN, Koštunica himself pointed to the fact that he had mentioned decentralization, cantonization, and territorial, cultural, and personal autonomy interchangeably.²⁰ In April 2004, Koštunica presented the Serbian government’s official “Plan for the Political Solution to the Situation in Kosovo and Metohija.” The plan, designed by Slobodan Samardžić and Alexandar Simić, both close advisors to Koštunica, proposed territorial autonomy for the Serb community, arising from the establishment of a “region” as well as “cultural and personal autonomy” which would protect the rights of Serbs living outside the area of territorial autonomy in Kosovo. The “region” proposed would provide for five territorial entities where wide autonomy would be granted to Serbs and other non-Albanian groups. The plan suggested the devolution of powers to the Serb institutions in Kosovo, ranging from health, education to the judiciary and police. The proposal advocated a form of “autonomy-within-autonomy” (Autonomy to the Kosovar-Albanians from Belgrade, and to the Kosovar Serbs from Priština). Effectively, the proposal built its claim for autonomy on the argument that the March 2004 unrest had proven that Kosovo was not ripe for integration, and that the international community had not succeeded in protecting the Kosovar Serb community during the riots. It argued that the proposal for territorial autonomy was not a call for partition, and that it did not reject multinationalism.²¹ However, the proposal would entail an almost completely separate system of governance in Kosovo. The plan also projected further institutionalization of the parallel structures. The plan was not positively received by the international community or the Kosovar-Albanians, and also viewed with skepticism by the enclave Kosovar-Serbs. It would nonetheless come to form the core of much of Belgrade’s policy towards Kosovo in the ensuing years and the DSS influence on it is clearly visible. One reason behind Koštunica’s terminological vagueness again related to keeping all options open and to maximize Serb gains in negotiations. The increased emphasis on a territorial solution was nevertheless based on an understanding that it would not be very realistic, or desirable, to return Serbian rule to the Albanian majority population regions. Therefore, as the government plan suggested, Belgrade increasingly concentrated their attention on the ethnic rights of the compact Serbian-majority communities in Northern Kosovo.

Notwithstanding Tadić's more accommodating attitude toward the international community, he has remained staunchly opposed to independence for Kosovo and insistent on the preservation of Serbian sovereignty over this territory. Like Koštunica, Tadić was of the opinion that Kosovo should remain part of Serbia and that he and the government would not accept an alteration in Serbia's sovereignty over Kosovo and the territorial integrity of the state.²² The 23 October 2004 elections in Kosovo were the first test in the relationship between Koštunica and Tadić. Koštunica advocated a boycott by Kosovar Serbs of the elections, while Boris Tadić, after strong international pressure, on 5 October called on the Kosovar Serbs to vote. Tadić also criticized Koštunica and the Serbian Orthodox Patriarch Pavle for not putting enough effort into discussing the situation in Kosovo before taking a stance on participation.²³ Tadić questioned how a boycott of the elections would benefit the Kosovar Serbs, and argued that nothing would be won if one left the game while it was still in play. Rather, Tadić argued, in the ensuing round of preliminary talks concerning final status for Kosovo, it was better to participate in order to gain a better position than the one presently held.²⁴ Tadić's call came very late and too close to the elections. This tactic proved a failure, and only a fraction of Kosovar Serb representatives followed his advice. Broad segments of the Serb and Kosovar Serb representatives, including Nebojsa Čović, Rada Trajković and Milan Ivanović took a position against the Kosovar Serb participation, arguing that the time was not ripe for this. The decision by a few Kosovar Serb representatives, including the SLMK (Serbian List for Kosovo and Metohija) led by Oliver Ivanović, and the Serbian Resistance Movement under the leadership of Momčilo Trajković to participate, appears to have been made prior to Tadić's appeal, and was partly an act to mark the Kosovar Serbs dissatisfaction with Belgrade's attempt to tell them what to do. In the end, only less than 1% of the Kosovar Serb electorate took part in the elections, and 12 of the 22²⁵ seats that Povratak had acquired in the 2001 elections now went to other (Kosovar-Albanian) parties. Despite the lack of impact made by Tadić's initiative, this was nevertheless the first time that anybody had challenged the DSS line on Kosovo directly.

Tadić's initiative posed little threat, and with Koštunica in the leading seat, the DSS gained increased control over key ministries and also amplified its influence in Kosovo. The DSS wanted to transform the CCK into a ministry for Kosovo and Metohija, which would give

them increased ability to control the government's policy on Kosovo. Hardliners like Jakšić and Ivanović with strong DSS links gained more influence in northern Kosovo, and Koštunica kept a stronger control over Čović and the CCK. Koštunica reduced the subsidies going to the CCK and on several occasions, threatened to throw Čović out of office. Relations between Koštunica and Čović quickly deteriorated; indeed, Čović had supported Tadić's candidacy rather than that of the DSS candidate Dragan Marčićanin. Tadić's election to the Presidency temporarily boosted Čović's confidence, who in the attempt to save his political career increasingly spoke out against Koštunica. However, Koštunica continued to sideline Čović, and initiated direct contact with the Kosovar Serb leaders. In the spring of 2005, the Serbian government adopted a new plan for decentralization, but the CCK and Čović did not participate in this process. Čović remained in his position as head of the CCK until August 2005, when he was ousted from both that position and his position in the government, and replaced by Sanda Rašković-Ivić, vice-president of DSS.²⁶

“More than autonomy but less than independence” – Preparation for status talks

The relationship between Tadić and Koštunica improved somewhat in the first half of 2005. From March to July, the politicians engaged in lively discussions in preparation for the decentralization talks in Vienna in August 2005, and the anticipated Comprehensive Review of Standards undertaken by the Norwegian Ambassador to NATO, Special Envoy Kai Eide, to be presented in October the same year.²⁷ During these talks Belgrade presented a more cooperative spirit, and were increasingly willing to consider extensive autonomy for the Kosovar Albanians. Various alternatives were considered, provided that they did not lead to Kosovo's independence. In April, Tadić and Koštunica requested direct talks with Kosovo president Ibrahim Rugova and Prime Minister Bajram Kosumi respectively but the requests were turned down.²⁸ The process of finding a resolution to the question of Kosovo's status became the subject of more focused attention when Martti Ahtisaari was appointed Special Envoy to the UN Secretary General in November 2005. The essence of the government's new position was presented at a meeting in New York in September and expressed in the sentence; “More than autonomy but less than independence.” What this meant in practice remained rather uncertain.

According to CCK head Sanda Rašković-Ivić, this formula entailed “the sovereignty of Serbia over Kosovo, and [the granting of] judicial, executive and legislative power to the province.”²⁹ Serbia would also retain control of Kosovo’s borders, loose oversight over fiscal and customs policy, and defense and foreign representation competencies.³⁰

The government’s position on Kosovo going into the status talks was refined when Koštunica put forward a proposal for a formal resolution in mid-November. The resolution insisted on the maintenance of Serbia’s territorial integrity and continuing sovereignty over Kosovo but was willing to grant wide autonomy to the Kosovar-Albanians. SRS deputy leader Tomislav Nikolić expressed his agreement with Koštunica that the parliament would not accept partitioning of Kosovo or an imposed solution.³¹ The resolution also contained a clause stating that any attempt to do so, would be declared void and illegal by Serbia.³² President Tadić criticized Koštunica for holding consultations with the leaders of the SRS and the SPS, and both the formulation and the recognition of the resolution carried the unmistakable imprint of the DSS, SRS, and SPS. The DS insisted that they had not been asked to part-take in the consultations to form the resolution. Consequently, the DS boycotted the parliament and questioned its legitimacy, after having, in their opinion, ignored two parliamentary seats.³³

Simultaneously, during a meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin on 15 November 2005, Tadić launched his own proposal that Kosovo could be divided into two entities. The Serbian entity would have special ties to Serbia, while both the Kosovar Serbian and Albanians would enjoy substantial autonomy and have specially defined relations in Kosovo institutions.³⁴ His proposal on the formation of two entities was not a new one, but represented a continuation of the ideas of late DS-leader and former prime minister Zoran Đinđić in 2003.³⁵ A similar proposal had also been advocated by Nebojša Čović. Tadić’s initiative nevertheless took the other parties by surprise and provoked a variety of reactions from the Belgrade political community. Tadić’s proposal was launched as a contribution to the debate over decentralization but accusations that it in reality constituted a prelude to partition soon emerged. The SRS also charged that Tadić’s proposal would grant conditional independence to Kosovo.³⁶ Nikolić criticized Tadić for not having presented the plan to the parliament prior to the meeting with Putin, arguing that he was not sure “whether this means autonomy for Kosovo where Serbs would have a small entity, or whether this means two entities, or a state where Serbia would have a small

entity.”³⁷ On the other hand, Tadić’s proposal received support from such different quarters as Nebojša Čović, well-known writer Dobrica Ćosić and G17+ leader Miroljub Labus. As all of them had publicly expressed support for partition, the Contact Group³⁸ was hardly convinced by Tadić’s argument that the proposal was one for decentralization, and remained skeptical of it. Tadić’s consultations with G17+ leader and Vice Prime Minister Miroljub Labus shortly before launching his proposal further strengthened this impression. One of Tadić’s advisors, Dušan Bataković, nevertheless pointed to the broad recommendations of Kai Eide’s report, in an attempt to justify the two-entity approach in a decentralization perspective, rather than a partition perspective. According to Bataković, the plan for the formation of two entities included only the forming of Serb municipalities, and not linking them physically into a whole. The plan, in his view, provided “for the local police and judiciary, health care, economy, finances and privatization.”³⁹

Tadić’s proposal demonstrated the lack of coordination in Belgrade as it went into the status talks, and the press hinted at party conflicts between the president and prime minister’s cabinets going on behind the scenes, allegedly over the distribution of roles in the upcoming negotiations.⁴⁰ Some reports stated that Koštunica did not want to leave the key role to Tadić, even if it was “the President’s duty to look after the sovereignty of the country,” but other accusations emerged to the effect that Koštunica had attempted to shift responsibility over to Tadić in order to force him to be the one to sign a possible deal on Kosovo.⁴¹ Despite obvious disagreements, Belgrade politicians attempted to synchronize their positions. The DS eventually decided to participate in the debate on the resolution in parliament on 20 November, but abstained from voting on it. The president requested that the government state its position on his proposal calling for the creation of two entities. Despite the fact that Tadić had referred to the government resolution as “a list of nice wishes,” Koštunica’s government issued a statement saying that Tadić’s plan was not contrary to the government’s resolution, and that it was in line with the 2004 Plan for Political Settlement for Kosovo. The daily newspaper *Večernje novosti* argued that the entity concept had been incorporated in the government’s plan, and that the “staff” who had drafted the resolution had decided not to use the word entities, because it could have connotations of an independent state, pointing to Bosnia-Herzegovina as an example. The use of the word “regions” rather than entities, the drafters insisted, accord-

ing to *Večernje novosti*, was just a matter of semantics rather than fundamental differences.⁴²

However, the divergence between Koštunica and Tadić went deeper than semantics and also had to do with ideological differences over values and their future visions for Serbia. As Koštunica increasingly came to rely on the support of the Radicals to stay in power, the distance between him and Tadić became greater. In this power struggle, the Radicals used Kosovo to maintain influence over Koštunica, who again used Kosovo to apply pressure on Tadić. Being involved in the status negotiation process over Kosovo was risky for both Tadić and Koštunica, since signing of any document granting independence to Kosovo—be it directly or indirectly based on conditionality—would have had a negative impact on the signatory's party's election prospects.

Status Talks

The status talks took place from February to September 2006, and brought the negotiations over Kosovo into more formalized form. Meetings were held in Vienna between UNOSEK, Belgrade, and Priština, and expert teams were sent to both capitals. Hectic diplomatic activities happened in the background, and the EU, NATO, and the Contact Group engaged in the effort to define the continuing international presence in Kosovo. A set of guiding principles launched by the Contact Group and approved by the Security Council in November, made clear that once “the process has started, it cannot be blocked and must be brought to a conclusion.” It further recommended that the eventual outcome should be endorsed by the UN Security Council. The Contact Group also made clear that there would be no return to pre-1999 arrangements, that partition was out of the question, and that no part of Kosovo's territory would become part of another state.⁴³ In late November 2005, Belgrade presented a joint negotiation team entrusted with the task of overseeing and participating in the upcoming status talks. Tadić and Koštunica were the main negotiators, together with Foreign Minister Vuk Drašković. The only two Kosovar Serb representatives on the team were Marko Jakšić and Goran Bogdanović.⁴⁴ The SRS and SPS opted to stay out of the negotiation team and the SRS stated that it would not take any responsibility for the outcome of the talks.⁴⁵ Tadić made public statements preparing the Serbian population for the eventuality that a solution could be imposed on Serbia and was more willing to negotiate with the international community. Koštunica stub-

bornly continued to insist that Belgrade would regard any attempt to impose a solution as illegal and illegitimate.

Former president of Finland Martti Ahtisaari, who had been appointed UN Special Envoy for the Kosovo Status Process in November 2005, and the international community supported Belgrade in its wish to discuss decentralization and other “technical” matters first, as this would enable the Serbian delegation to stay in the negotiating process for longer.⁴⁶ The Contact Group and Ahtisaari wanted to ensure Kosovar Albanian cooperation to resolve as many issues pertaining to inter-ethnic relations and the minorities before commencing status talks, which they expected would lead up to imposed independence. For Belgrade, the aim was the opposite one, as it wanted to prevent the movement toward status resolution and a looming imposed settlement. The attitude of the Serbian negotiation team was to a large extent shaped by a notion, already early in the process, that the talks carried a bias towards the Albanians, and that the main focus of the international community was geared towards getting a quick status settlement expected to culminate in Kosovo’s independence. The negotiation team often appeared less than fully prepared, until July 2006 sent only junior officials, and sought to delay talks.⁴⁷ In view of their aim to postpone any settlements, the request made by Koštunica and Tadić to the Contact Group and Ahtisaari in early May 2006 to proceed directly to status talks and toward detailed discussion of the future status of Kosovo could appear somewhat contradictory. However, conceptual differences between Priština, which considered decentralization the price to pay for independence, and Belgrade, which viewed decentralization as part of the process of accepting Kosovo’s independence, limited the possibility for compromise even on “technical issues.” Belgrade wished to avoid engaging in talks related to details surrounding general mechanisms to ensure minorities rights and protection within a future (presumably independent) Kosovo for fear of signaling *de facto* recognition of Kosovo’s future independence.

Parallel to status talks over Kosovo, Serbia encountered additional challenges that were influenced by the Kosovo negotiations, and which again had an impact on Serbia’s attitude in the talks. At home, Serbia faced a Montenegrin referendum, leading to the dissolution of the state union between Serbia and Montenegro in May 2006. This implied that any attempt to find a regionally based solution where Kosovo would be granted broad autonomy within a federal context was no longer a feasible option. The independence for Montenegro also thwarted the

possibility, doubtlessly unrealistic already earlier, of Kosovo joining the state union in a confederate arrangement. Concurrently, the loss of Montenegro increased the dissatisfaction among the nationalist forces already disgruntled over the shrinking size of Serbian territory. Another issue of continuous preoccupation was Serbia's relation to the EU and the possible prospect for future membership. In May 2006, the EU put negotiations over the Stabilization and Association Agreement (SAA) on ice due to deficient cooperation with the Hague Tribunal, and increasingly, the EU was also used as leverage in the status talks. However, at times the EU overestimated the effect that the European factor would have on Belgrade, particularly on the nationalists whose outlook was generally Euro-skeptical. In June, Koštunica adopted a more aggressive rhetoric, demonstrating in practice his statement that "the Serbian diplomatic offensive on the issue of Kosovo has been raised by an octave."⁴⁸ Koštunica criticized the EU for setting too many conditions in the negotiations over Serbia's EU ascendancy. A notion that Belgrade had to choose between the EU and Kosovo emerged as a main dividing line in a polarizing Serbian political landscape, and divergence over EU rapprochement contributed to the further deterioration of the relationship between Koštunica and Tadić, who viewed the prime minister's confrontational approach as detrimental to Serbia's interests. Also significant for Belgrade's attitude to the talks was the increasing Russian support for its position. The Contact Group's conclusion early in 2006, that Serbian diplomats were correct in their assertion that the Security Council could not itself declare Kosovo independent, strengthened Serbia's legal position.⁴⁹ With Russian support, Serbia sought to delay and prevent a Security Council resolution to replace UNSCR 1244, and in this manner, possibly create a frozen situation that would delay a declaration of independence. In August, Koštunica started to attack Martti Ahtisaari himself, and to incite public opinion against him. The DSS's discrediting of Ahtisaari continued through the autumn, with Koštunica demanding Ahtisaari's removal. The talks lasted until September with little progress. Ahtisaari indicated that he saw the talks as essentially dead, and signaled that he would present a proposed final status solution to the Contact Group before the year's end. A pause was made to allow for a referendum to be held in October over the introduction of a new Serbian constitution.

Domestic politics and the implications of the status talks

The impact of Kosovo on Serbian politics in earnest became visible by the autumn 2006. In a simultaneous attempt to create legal obstacles to Kosovo's independence and prevent a breakdown of his increasingly vulnerable minority government, Koštunica sought to rush through a new constitution. Replacing Milošević's constitution had been identified as a priority task for the DOS when it came to power, but the dispute between the DSS and the DS had caused a delay. They disagreed over several key elements, the most important being the restoration of autonomy for Vojvodina and Kosovo, which the DS favored but which Koštunica opposed. Koštunica used the new constitution to consolidate his power and to promulgate his vision of a Serbia which included Kosovo. He thus introduced a preamble on Kosovo in the new constitution that made it legally impossible for Serbia to recognize Kosovo independence. A vote on the draft constitution took place in parliament on 30 September. The SPS and SRS supported Koštunica, who also managed to negotiate the support of the DS. After receiving the necessary two-thirds votes, a referendum followed. Although the process was highly controversial and not very transparent and allegations of fraud were made, the new constitution was passed with congratulations from representatives of the international community.⁵⁰ The process contributed considerably to strengthen Koštunica's hand vis-à-vis that of Tadić. None of the promises granted to Tadić in the horse trade with Koštunica to accept the constitution were in the end honored. Elections would not be held before the end of the year as promised, but were pushed into 2007. The constitution failed to restore the autonomy of Vojvodina and Kosovo that had been revoked by Milošević. This prompted the leader of League of Social Democrats of Vojvodina (LSV) Nenad Čanak to state that "Kosovo has not been part of Serbia for the last 7 years and Koštunica is in delusion that, by introducing the Kosovo preamble to the new constitution, he will keep it from independence."⁵¹

The parliament agreed to promulgate the new constitution on 8 November, but was unable to agree on a new constitutional law, since this should also incorporate a date for the next elections. The timing of elections was closely linked to the controversy about Kosovo, as an important motive for the wish of DSS, SPS and SRS to postpone them was to delay a decision on the status of Kosovo. However, at this point the Contact Group exerted its pressure and signaled that an announce-

ment on Kosovo's status would be imminent lest a date be set for the elections *before* Ahtisaari's statement on Kosovo scheduled for 10 November. Tadić finally announced that parliamentary elections would be scheduled for January 2007. Ahtisaari indicated he would launch his report on Kosovo status immediately following these elections.⁵² In an attempt to soften Serbia's rejection of an imposed status settlement, and to support the pro-European forces prior to elections, Serbia was granted membership in the Partnership for Peace at the Riga NATO summit on 29 November 2006.

2007–2008: Politics under Kosovo's Shadow

The 2007 parliamentary elections made visible the deep divisions within the Serbian political landscape that was becoming practically paralyzed by the Kosovo question. The elections and the ensuing consultations to form a government were interwoven with, and hostage to, the process of finding a settlement in Kosovo. The nationalist/patriotic parties (SRS, DSS/NS, SPS) obtained 58% of the votes and the Pro-European parties (DS, G17+, LDP/GSS/LSV) received 37.6% of the votes.⁵³ The SRS again emerged as the largest party with 81 seats and controlled the majority in the parliament. Since the SRS was not particularly interested in being in power when Kosovo was lost and even the DSS, contrary to speculations was unlikely to make a coalition with the Radicals, it soon became evident that a new government would not be formed quickly. The international community, fearing that the SRS could come into power, leveled considerable pressure on Tadić to form a government with Koštunica, despite obvious tension between their respective parties. Radical leader Tomislav Nikolić also exploited the international fear against his party to scare the DS into negotiating with Koštunica over the formation of a new government. This would allow the SRS to remain in opposition with no need to take responsibility over a possible loss of Kosovo, while at the same time to be able to criticize the government and to influence Koštunica to advocate his party's case in parliament. Koštunica pressured Tadić, who emerged as the loser in these negotiations as he agreed to considerable concessions to the DSS for its agreement to enter into a coalition. Koštunica used the post-election limbo as an excuse for refusing to receive Ahtisaari when he came to Belgrade to present his draft Comprehensive Proposal on Kosovo 2 February.⁵⁴ Ahtisaari's proposal offered substantial decentralization, and provided for an increase of five new Serbian majority

municipalities in Kosovo. Provisions were made for questions with key impact on the lives of ethnic minorities to require their approval in Parliament, and properties of the Serbian Orthodox Church would remain fully under its control with security provided. The proposal recognized the deep divisions between the two communities, and did not aspire to integrate them. Instead, it allowed opportunities for continued close Kosovar Serb ties to Serbia, including financial subsidies and cooperation in fields like health and education.⁵⁵ Former US Ambassador to Serbia William Montgomery described Ahtisaari's recommendations as "thorough, show[ing] an understanding of the complexities of Kosovo, and go[ing] a long way towards providing assurances to the Kosovo Serbs that their culture, language, religion, way of life [...] will remain in place." However, he also pointed out that the proposal "fully provides a roadmap for the independence of Kosovo within a fairly short period of time without once even mentioning the 'I' word."⁵⁶

As expected, Ahtisaari's recommendations were rejected by Belgrade. On 15 February, the Serbian National Assembly passed a resolution rejecting "all articles in the UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy's Proposal which breach the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Serbia as an internationally recognized state."⁵⁷ The resolution did nevertheless authorize the Kosovo negotiating team to participate in additional talks in Vienna, held with both parties before Ahtisaari declared the talks exhausted, and presented his report and recommendations on 10 March 2007.⁵⁸ The UN Secretary-General endorsed the recommendations and forwarded them to the Security Council on 26 March 2007. Belgrade spent most of the remainder of the year fighting against the approval of his proposal.

At the last minute before the deadline ran out, a government coalition consisting of the DS, DSS-NS and G17+ was formed on 15 May 2008.⁵⁹ From its inception, the coalition was extremely fragile, and the greatest disagreements occurred *within* the ruling coalition itself, between the DSS-NS which increasingly relied on the support of the nationalist/patriotic majority in parliament against its government partners DS and G17+.⁶⁰ The government presented a list of five key points: keeping Kosovo, pursuing European integration, cooperating with the ICTY, pursuing a vigorous social and economic policy and fighting corruption.⁶¹ For Koštunica, the first point was by far the most important. Koštunica bargained hard and the DSS retained control of the premiership, the influential ministry of the interior, and the

security-intelligence agency (BIA), and pushed through the creation of a new “Ministry for Kosovo and Metohija.” The DS also supported this first point, on keeping Kosovo. However, the four other points—all constituting important issues on an agenda in pursuit of civic values—carried much greater resonance with the DS than with DSS and Koštunica. Thus, the question became one of how much the DS would be willing to sacrifice for the sake of Kosovo.

Belgrade remained unified in its opposition to Kosovo’s independence, but the divisive effect of Kosovo in domestic politics became more evident. The DSS immediately sought to take control over the government’s Kosovo policy and elevate the maintenance of Serbian sovereignty over Kosovo as the government’s highest priority. This enabled the DSS to dictate Belgrade’s Kosovo policy and the behavior of the negotiation team, and allowed Koštunica to retain his grip on Tadić, who to a large extent became hostage to the prime minister’s policy on Kosovo. The DS and Tadić attempted to keep the prioritized focus on European integration separate from the Kosovo question, but Koštunica made it clear that Serbia would not sacrifice Kosovo for the sake of European integration. This again showed the deeper divergences in the values supported by the two men and their respective parties. Koštunica’s ability to use the nationalist majority in parliament to keep Kosovo at the top of the political agenda locked Tadić in a relationship where he had to accept the nationalists’ more aggressive Kosovo rhetoric, if he wanted to avoid being labeled a traitor to Serbia. In addition, Tadić needed Koštunica’s support in the upcoming presidential elections. The DSS, SRS, and SPS frequently accused the DS of taking orders “from abroad” and being too eager to please Brussels and Washington. International meddling and statements meant to “assist” Tadić and the DS further fuelled such accusations.

The DSS strategy focused on stalling a resolution in the UNSC which would have allowed the implementation of the Ahtisaari plan and lead to Kosovo independence. To do so, Belgrade increasingly relied on Russian assistance. Russia insisted on the continuation of talks, hoping that this would buy Belgrade time, as well as to split the opinion within the EU. To a large degree, this strategy succeeded. Attempts to get a new Security Council resolution came to a halt during the summer 2007, as Russia’s threat to veto any attempt to implement conditional independence in Kosovo caused considerable concern with the EU and the United States. French president Nicholas Sarkozy proposed a new round of Priština-Belgrade talks, and although few

expected them to make any difference, they did at least allow the EU and US to buy some time to streamline their positions, and to resolve how to proceed given the absence of a UNSC resolution endorsing Ahtisaari's proposal.

The launch of Ahtisaari's plan, despite postponements, accentuated Belgrade's fear that the process was leading toward imminent Kosovo independence, and led to greater focus on salvaging at least part of Kosovo and taking full control over the areas with compact Serb populations. In its March 2007 comments on the Ahtisaari plan, the Serbian government renewed its support for the creation of a Serb entity, as originally launched in the Koštunica plan of 29 April 2004.⁶² The DSS focused its attention on the areas north of the River Ibar, and on preparing the ground for a possible *de facto* partition. Out of fear of being seen as renouncing sovereignty over the rest of Kosovo, the DSS particularly refrained from speaking loudly about partition. Within Kosovo, the Serbian government responded to Ahtisaari's proposal by further strengthening Serbian parallel structures. Through the promises of financial resources, combined with the threat of intimidation, the government in Belgrade attempted to maintain the loyalty of local Serbs and to prevent them from communicating with Priština or international bodies. The Ministry of Kosovo and Metohija under the leadership of Slobodan Samardžić threatened the cancellation of salaries for Kosovar Serbs participating in the November 2007 Kosovo elections, and for education and healthcare workers should they fail to withdraw from jobs in Kosovo's institutions.⁶³

Presidential elections 2008 – Kosovo and/or EU

Presidential elections were held in Serbia in January and February 2008, demonstrating once more the deep divisions in Serbian politics and the frail relations within the government. Again, the looming Kosovo question was significant for the elections, even if it was not the only theme in a campaign also focusing on bread and butter issues. In another sign of the deep divide between the premier and the president, Koštunica refused to back Tadić's candidacy during the presidential elections. He conditioned such support on signing an annex to the existing coalition deal, stating that a modified version of the Stabilization and Association Agreement (SAA), which the European Union had again put on the table in November 2007, would not be signed if the EU sent a mission to Kosovo without Security Council approval.

Tadić refused to succumb to Koštunica's pressure, and after massive mobilization, especially in Vojvodina, Tadić eventually got re-elected by a narrow margin (50.5 %), defeating the ultranationalist SRS Deputy leader Tomislav Nikolić (47.9%).⁶⁴ Koštunica's lack of support for Tadić ended any pretence of cooperation between them. It dealt Koštunica a considerable blow, but it did not deter him from blocking, only a few days later, the signing of the temporary Association Agreement. The rift between the DS and the DSS was further deepened following the 17 February 2008 declaration on Kosovo independence. On 8 March, Koštunica announced his resignation, citing disagreement over Kosovo as a main cause. Shortly thereafter Boris Tadić called for early parliamentary elections, scheduled to take place on 11 May alongside provincial and municipal elections, and the Serbian parliament was dissolved on 13 March.

Kosovo in Serbian Politics after the Declaration of Independence

The Kosovo question has continued to impact Serbian politics also after Kosovo's declaration of independence on 17 February 2008, but Serbia's response changed from seeking to prevent this from happening, to challenging the new state's legality, undermining international recognition of it, and, if possible, reversing the decision. Kosovo's independence was declared void and annulled in the National Assembly of Serbia shortly after Kosovo's Declaration of Independence. The government activated parts of a Kosovo Action Plan (KAP) initiated by the DSS, which it had launched in November 2007. Its specific contents remained elusive, but the plan involved a stream of visits to Kosovo by Serbian ministers, the initiation of criminal charges against Kosovo's leaders, the refusal of Serbia to recognize or have contact with the new EU Mission to Kosovo and the temporary recall of diplomatic presences to countries that recognized Kosovo. Considerable pressure was mounted on Montenegro, Bosnia, and Macedonia not to recognize Kosovo, and Koštunica warned of possible consequences should they chose to recognize Kosovo. But in October 2008, Macedonia and Montenegro nonetheless extended diplomatic recognition to Kosovo; in response, Belgrade expelled the ambassadors representing those two states from Serbia. It has also brought Belgrade into conflict with Slovenia due to the latter's mediating efforts in its capacity of holding the EU Presidency during the spring of 2008. Coordinated

protests were organized in the Kosovar Serb communities, and in northern Kosovo more violent actions took place, some with the support of Serbian military reservists and civilian dressed MUP officers. After the burning down of two northern border posts, the violence peaked with the killing of a Ukrainian UNMIK policeman during the 17 March riots outside the North Mitrovica courthouse, following the admittedly ill-timed and ill-coordinated UNMIK-KFOR action against the building. A stream of rallies were also staged across Serbia, culminating in the Belgrade rally 21 February, where the normally languid Koštunica held his most dedicated speech on Kosovo to the Serbian people. As much as many Serbs were upset by Kosovo's independence, many were also equally upset by the response of some younger citizens who went on the rampage in Belgrade on the night of Koštunica's speech.

Kosovo's declaration of independence deepened the split in Serbian politics. After the government's collapse, Koštunica once again found himself in a caretaker role for a technical government, and through its control over the Ministry for Kosovo, Ministry of Interior as well as the security forces (BIA), DSS were able to effectuate its post-UDI policy on Kosovo with very little interference from other former partners. The DS retained its primary focus on EU rapprochement, and attacked the DSS's Kosovo policy during the pre-election campaign. Both Tadić and then Defense Minister Dragan Šutanovac argued that they had not yet seen the government's Action Plan for Kosovo, claiming that it was in fact party policy and not government policy. On 29 March, Tadić attacked Slobodan Samardžić's statements on functional partition, arguing that he was trying to partition Kosovo without government approval. Samardžić rejected the accusations, saying that he had never advocated territorial partition, but only pointed to the *de facto* functional partition that had already existed for eight years.⁶⁵

Serbia at a crossroads: Kosovo's impact on Serbian politics following May 11 Serbian elections

Reactions to Kosovo's declaration of independence, while heartfelt, must also be seen as a continuation of the internal political processes and power struggles that had surfaced prior to 17 February, and as positioning for the parliamentary, provincial and municipal elections scheduled for 11 May 2008. The 11 May elections were presented as the most decisive crossroads for Serbia's further path since October

2000. It was to a large extent an election over values, where voters were presented with the alternative between preserving Serbia's sovereignty over Kosovo (with the consequent isolation and rapprochement to Russia), or pursuing a path toward greater EU integration. The pro-European forces strove to keep the EU accession question separate from its policy on Kosovo, while the Nationalist/Radical forces refused to negotiate over the accession question unless it accepted Serbia within constitutional borders that included Kosovo. Minister of Finance Mlađan Dinkić (G17+) characterized the DSS's official position—"Serbia in Europe only with Kosovo"—as "tantamount to an unrealistic political goal." Referring to the Kosovo Myth, Dinkić pointed out that his position was "earthly, and what the DSS is saying is heavenly," describing Koštunica's policy over Kosovo as "insanity."⁶⁶ To encourage the Serbian electorate that it ought to choose this "earthly" alternative, the EU succeeded on the eve of the elections to persuade the Netherlands that Serbia should be allowed sign the SAA agreement, pending their fulfillment of certain conditions.⁶⁷

The parliamentary elections produced a surprising result, as the pro-European forces polled 38.75%—almost 10% more votes than all the pre-elections polls had predicted.⁶⁸ This did not in itself mean a victory for the pro-European forces, since they did not have the necessary mandates to form a government without the aid of Milošević's old party SPS, which emerged as the wildcard of the election. As such the 11 May election did not signal a fundamental change of values in Serbia or change in the attitude on Kosovo; rather it signaled that European integration held attraction to a large part of the Serbian electorate. The SPS eventually decided to support Tadić's pro-European ticket, and a new Serbian government was formed in early July 2008.⁶⁹ Although the new government continued to resist Kosovo's independence, the change of government in July 2008 did lead to a qualitative change in Serbia's approach to Kosovo. And though Kosovo continues to have substantial impact on Serbian politics, it no longer paralyses all else. The DS-led government's focus on achieving rapid EU accession has made it more important for Belgrade to gain control over the situation in Kosovo, while concurrently deflecting attention away from the issue at home. When coming to power, the post-July 2008 pro-European government adapted a two-track approach to Kosovo. Internationally, Serbia continued to refuse to recognise Kosovo's declaration of independence, and Foreign Minister Vuk Jeremić relentlessly and effectively lobbied against further inter-

national recognition of Kosovo, and against the entry of Kosovo into international forums. The government concentrated its actions against Kosovo independence within the legal and diplomatic field. Jeremić spent considerable energy on lobbying countries for support to Serbia's request for an opinion from the International Court of Justice on the legality of Kosovo UDI. Concurrently the pro-European Serbian government sought to work out a functional cooperation with the international community in Kosovo. Thus after a painstaking process, with a lot of shuttle diplomacy and considerable pressure leveled at the Serbian government by the European Union, Serbia finally accepted a reconfiguration from a UN to an EU-led mission, and consented to a Kosovo-wide EULEX deployment in December 2008. The Pro-European government initially had little support among the Kosovar Serbs, where support had gone to the DSS and SRS representatives elected in the 11 May local Serbian elections. These still controlled the (illegal) parallel Serbian municipal structures, especially in North Kosovo. Gradually the pro-European government took measures to assert its position on the ground in Kosovo, while refraining from getting into conflict with the hardliners. Belgrade decided to keep the Ministry for Kosovo, primarily to limit the influence of the Kosovar Serb Assembly initiated and controlled by hardliners in North Kosovo shortly after the election. In order to sever links to the nationalist parties in Belgrade and the ability of the nationalist opposition to control the hardline elements, the government started to reassess institutional arrangements and to audit financial links between Belgrade and the Kosovar oligarchs.⁷⁰ In the North, the influential Marko Jakšić was pressured with threats of financial auditing to relinquish his position at the Mitrovica hospital.⁷¹ Jakšić has despite this, together with Milan Ivanović, proved resilient in maintaining a presence in North Kosovo, though they lack the support from MUP that they had under Koštunica.⁷² Overall, however, the security situation has improved considerably in Kosovo since 2008, something reflected in statements from KFOR and the scaling down of its presence in Kosovo.⁷³ South of the Ibar, the situation has been different, and Kosovar Serbs have to a greater degree adapted to the new circumstances and to the new Kosovar structures. To obtain greater control over the money flow to the parallel Serbian structures, the Kosovo Ministry decided to move the CCK HQ from Mitrovica to Gračanica in 2008. Concurrently, the new Kosovo Minister transferred authority from the CCK municipal coordinators to the mayors elected to the Serbian parallel municipal assem-

blies, even if the majority of these belonged to their opponents' parties. Gradually, as the Government gained more control, they started to change these representatives. The Ministry for Kosovo, led by two Kosovar Serbs, Goran Bogdanović with sometimes controversial Oliver Ivanović as Secretary of State, stated that the ministry would no longer create policy for Kosovo, and that it wished to facilitate a gradual strengthening of Kosovar Serb representatives on the ground. Ivanović went as far as to state that the government will not use Kosovo for political reasons.⁷⁴

Although the pro-European government has been more cooperative with the international community, it should not be assumed that Serbia will change its position on the Kosovo question, nor could it be expected to facilitate recognition of Kosovo. The Serbian government has remained staunchly opposed to any attempts at cooperation between Priština and Kosovar Serbs which could be perceived as linked to the provisions of the Ahtisaari Plan. However, the Serbian government nevertheless wanted to ensure Serbian dividends from the decentralization process as outlined in the Ahtisaari Plan, but without recognizing the plan itself, as this would be perceived as recognizing Kosovo. The financial crisis has also had some impact both on the government's Kosovo policy, and on the degree to which the Kosovo question impacts on policy in Belgrade. To some extent the economic crisis has aided the government's effort to deflect the focus away from Kosovo. Even before this crisis hit, Belgrade signaled its intention to scale down the funding to the parallel structures, and to allow the Kosovar Serbs to look after their own affairs to a greater extent. Therefore, Kosovar Serb communities have been allowed to work out arrangements around many practical issues. All in all, Belgrade's focus on EU ascendancy has led the government to adopt a rather pragmatic attitude on Kosovo. Nevertheless, the Serbian government has had to keep up appearances to not be seen to sell out Kosovo. Much of the often aggressive government rhetoric on Kosovo and intricate diplomatic activity between Serbia, Brussels and the UN is a result of the sensitivity still surrounding Kosovo in Serbian politics. The local elections held in Kosovo in November and December 2009, once again demonstrated this, when Belgrade encouraged the Kosovar Serbs not to partake.⁷⁵ The elections again demonstrated a paradox, where Kosovar Serbian participation was important to secure Kosovar Serbian control over key Serbian majority municipalities in Kosovo, but where Belgrade feared that endorsement of such participation would signify recognition

of the Kosovar structures. Despite the lack of Belgrade endorsement, Kosovar Serbs in central Kosovo participated in the elections in relatively high numbers.⁷⁶ Local Kosovar Serbian leaders, who emphasized their main priority to be “taking control over the local self-government” in the new municipality of Gračanica,⁷⁷ submitted no less than 21 lists to the Kosovo CEC prior to the election. Despite the rather hard rhetoric from Kosovo Minister Goran Bogdanović and his deputy, Oliver Ivanović, against participation in the elections, post-election statements have been more conciliatory. In an interview from 29 November 2009, Bogdanović stated that “differing opinions and actions [among Kosovar Serbs] are not a reason why anyone should be discriminated or underestimated.” However, he also warned that the newly elected representatives could not “expect to represent the Serbian community.”⁷⁸ Bogdanović nonetheless conceded that while Belgrade will only deal with the representatives elected in the 11 May 2008 Serbian local elections, the newly elected representatives in the Kosovo elections “have the legitimacy, but do not have the credibility to represent our people.”⁷⁹

While nobody within the international community expects Belgrade to recognize Kosovo, diplomatic pressure has been leveled at Belgrade to tone down its aggressive rhetoric against Kosovo’s participation in the international arena and its obstruction of international recognition of Kosovo.⁸⁰ Brussels has—despite occasional statements to the contrary—made the Kosovo status question and Serbia’s acceptance of an EU presence in Kosovo part of the negotiations over Serbia’s EU ascendancy. Concurrently, concessions have been made in other areas to keep up the momentum of the Serbian government’s EU policy. A decision was made on 30 Nov 2009 in Brussels by the EU Council of Ministers for Interior and Justice, to lift the visa requirements for citizens of Serbia traveling to the Schengen Area countries from December 19.⁸¹ On 22 December 2009, Serbia handed in an application for EU membership.⁸² And while the SAA still remains locked at the time of writing, awaiting the fulfillment of Serbia’s obligations to the ICTY, Brussels decided to unfreeze the interim trade agreement with Serbia on 7 December 2009.⁸³ This followed positive signals from Brussels, regarding the progress made by Serbia in its cooperation with ICTY. According to B92, EU enlargement official Stefan Füle recommends that Serbia be allowed to start the process towards the ratification process for the Stabilization and Association Agreement between Serbia and the EU as soon as the summer of 2010.⁸⁴ In

the meantime, Serbia awaits an answer from the ICJ on its question on the legality of Kosovo's UDI. This case has more than anything allowed the Tadić administration some breathing space on Kosovo since coming to power. The government attempts to uphold a confident rhetoric on its outcome, and in an article in *Blic* in January 2010, Belgrade argued for the success of their aggressive diplomatic offensive in attracting the attention of the EU to Serbia's stand on Kosovo question.⁸⁵ The Government also launched a new initiative in January 2010 for Belgrade-Priština talks on status.⁸⁶ However, Belgrade also points to the pragmatic reality that the Kosovo question continues to obstruct its rapprochement to the EU, its relations to the international community and its relations to the other states in the region, most of whom have already recognized Kosovo.⁸⁷

Conclusion

Kosovo has remained a forceful issue with considerable impact on Serbian politics after the ousting of Milošević from power in 2000. Through these years, the intensity with which Kosovo has influenced internal politics in Serbia has varied, but Belgrade's endgames have not changed substantially. There has been considerable consensus in Belgrade with regard to its favored solutions to Kosovo, but political elites have differed on how to weigh the importance of the Kosovo question compared to other concerns facing Serbian society. The outward consensus on Kosovo within the Serbian body politic must to some extent be contributed to the lack of room for politicians to divert on this issue without being labeled a traitor of Serbia. In this respect, the consensus is in part a sign of acquiescence and fear of political consequences, rather than lack of disagreement.

In a wider perspective, the Kosovo question has had considerable impact on hindering value transformation in Serbia. Koštunica has led Serbia onto a path defined chiefly by a nationalist vision building on the ideological mold dating back to the Milošević era. The failure to make a clean break and create a discontinuity with the Milošević era, is rooted in a disagreement in Serbia between two increasingly polarized visions of Serbia's future, and the values that will inform its road ahead. This lack of consensus on Serbia's post-Milošević path ahead also transcends to the Kosovo question. And although Belgrade has been in considerable agreement on the wish to keep Kosovo as part of

Serbia, Kosovo became an issue that paradoxically, contributed to increase the bipolar divide in Serbian politics.

Serbia's engagement with Kosovo has had long-term and potentially more destabilizing influence on its relations with its neighbors. It has to a large degree hindered reconciliations with the surrounding countries, and at some point threatened to reopen old wounds and questions in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Preševo Valley and elsewhere. Belgrade's engagement with Kosovo has had significant economic consequences for Serbia, as its funding of parallel structures has eaten considerably into already strained budgets. The losers are ultimately the Serbian electorate and the Kosovar Serbs. The focus on Kosovo has to a large extent overshadowed other challenges facing Serbian society after Milošević, prevented a reconciliation with its past, inhibited relations to neighboring states and hindered a "normalization" of politics in Serbia. In Kosovo, Belgrade has continued to obstruct any development toward greater integration of Kosovar Serbs into the political structures of the Republic of Kosovo.

While Kosovo will remain an important issue also in the future, the 2008 election results showed that the incentive to join the EU weighed equally powerfully as the issue of Kosovo for many Serbs. The question is to what extent political elites in Serbia can continue to use Kosovo as a political coin. The DSS policy of playing the Kosovo card has been highly effective but has ultimately also had a price, especially when combined with Koštunica's Euro-skepticism. The Radical/nationalist bloc did not fully manage to capitalize on the Kosovo question less than three months after the declaration of independence and at a time when it was at the very height of focus in Serbian politics. The parties that have most vociferously engaged with the Kosovo question, who made it the main issue of their election campaign and who had the strongest grip on the Kosovar Serbian population, were also the parties who lost the most support. In a Serbian political landscape, whose polarization it had in part contributed to, DSS has lost many voters to either the SRS or to the DS. Shortly before the split in the SRS in 2008, Tomislav Nikolić also pointed to the fact that the SRS, whose strategy heavily played on the Kosovo factor, may have reached its maximum potential for voters.⁸⁸ This is at least a sign that the national/Radical bloc has been searching for a new way to gain votes following the Kosovo declaration of independence and its failure to capitalize on this in the last election.

Demonstrating a greater determination after the 2008 parliamentary elections than in previous years to gain control over its policies in Kosovo, the Pro-European government has to some extent succeeded in keeping the opposition at bay and preventing it from using the Kosovo question to straightjacket Tadić and the DS. The government's aggressive international rhetoric against Kosovo at the international level, has had a certain effect in avoiding the traitor stamp at home. It has also made things more difficult at an international and regional level, where relations to its neighbors remain strained. The DS-led government has showed a good deal of pragmatism on cooperation with international institutions in Kosovo and in the Hague, a strategy that has earned them considerable concessions from the EU. This does not mean that relations are easy, and Belgrade continues to have to balance its eagerness for EU ascendancy with domestic concerns. While the Kosovo question has held less of an all-consuming effect on Serbian politics after May 2008 than it did in the period 2004–2008, this does not mean that the Kosovo question will disappear from the political struggles in Belgrade anytime soon. The nationalist populist, pro-European profile of Nikolić's new party, the Serbian Progressive Party (SNS), has proved to have considerable appeal among the Serbian electorate.

Notes

- ¹ Koštunica, Speech 21 February, translated from <http://www.srbija.gov.rs/vesti/vest.php?id=83451> [accessed on May 24 2010].
- ² Dusan Janjić, *Ogledi o Kosovu* (Belgrade: Draslar partner, 2007), p. 10.
- ³ Koštunica, "DSS programme," at <http://www.dss.org.rs/pages/article.php?id=54> [accessed on May 24 2010].
- ⁴ Paradoxically, another issue, not mentioned on their website, but considered to have had a decisive impact on Koštunica's resolve to leave the DS, was the latter's decision to participate in a coalition willing to cooperate with the SPS and Milošević.
- ⁵ Koštunica was however identified by some commentators as a nationalist from early on. See Sabrina P. Ramet and Phil Lyon, "Discord, Denial, Dysfunction: The Serbia-Montenegro-Kosovo Triangle," in *Problems of Post-Communism*, Vol. 49, No. 5 (September/October 2002): 3–19; and Norman Cigar. *Vojislav Koštunica & Serbia's Future* (London: Saqi Books 2001) for a critical account of Koštunica's political career.
- ⁶ ICG Balkans Report No. 117, (Belgrade) "Serbia's Transition: Reforms Under Siege," p. 10.
- ⁷ Interview with James Lyon, Belgrade, 15 July 2008.
- ⁸ The notable exceptions were well-known Serbian writer Dobrica Ćosić, long-time preoccupied with Kosovo and advocate of partition; and Belgrade scholar Branislav Krstić, with a background as urban planner who worked for the CCK, who in 2001 published a booklet arguing for territorial demarcation. His booklet also included maps showing how he envisioned the division of Kosovo into an Albanian and Serbian entity. See Dobrica Ćosić, *Kosovo* (Belgrade: Novosti, 2004), and Branislav Krstic, *Kosovo Facing Judgement of History* (Belgrade: Coordination Centre for Kosovo, 2001).
- ⁹ Branislav Krstic, *Kosovo facing Judgement of History* (Belgrade: Coordination Centre for Kosovo, 2001). For a review of the book, see *Vreme*, (24 May 2001) "Compromise between Serb and Albanian rights," Milan Milošević <http://www.vreme.com/cms/view.php?id=212563> [accessed on May 24 2010].
- ¹⁰ Nebojsa Ćović, "Solving the Kosovo crisis in three stages," *Serbia Info news*, 2 July 2001, at, <http://www.serbia-info.com/news/2001-07/02/24239.html> [accessed 13 May 2008], p. 1.
- ¹¹ Janjić, *Ogledi o Kosovu*, p. 94.
- ¹² See Nebojša Popov and Kosta Nikolic, *Vojislav Koštunica: jedna karijera*. (Belgrade: Yucom, 2006), pp. 206–208. See also ICG Balkan Reports, No. 141, 18 March 2003, p. 13. A personal account of the process around this initiative can also be found on B92 Blog, Borut Šuklje "Đinđićev zahtev za rešenje statusa Kosova," B92, 19 February 2008, at <http://blog.b92.net/text/2289/Đinđićev%20zahtev%20za%20rešenje%20statusa%20Kosova/> [accessed on May 24 2010].

- ¹³ Borut Šuklje “Dindićev zahtev za rešenje statusa Kosova.”
- ¹⁴ ICG Europe Reports, No. 143, (Priština) “Kosovo’s Ethnic Dilemma: The Need for a Civic Contract,” 28 May 2003, p. 3.
- ¹⁵ Janjić, *Ogledi o Kosovu*, p. 182.
- ¹⁶ ICG Balkan Reports, No. 141, (Belgrade) “Serbia After Djindjic,” 18 March 2003, p. 13.
- ¹⁷ Popov and Nikolić, *Vojislav Koštunica*, pp. 206–208. For Ćosić’s assessment of the proposal, see Ćosić, *Kosovo* p. 209.
- ¹⁸ ICG Kosovo: Europe Report No.161, (Priština) “Toward Final Status,” 24 January 2005, p. 2
- ¹⁹ “Keynote address of Serbian Prime Minister Designate Vojislav Koštunica,” 2 March 2004, <http://www.srbija.gov.rs/vesti> [accessed on May 24 2010].
- ²⁰ “Između 17 i 31 marta,” *NIN*, (Belgrade) 1 April 2004 interview with Koštunica.
- ²¹ “A Plan for the Political Solution to the Situation in Kosovo and Metohija,” pp. 2–4. Available at <http://www.srbija.gov.rs/kosovo-metohija/index.php?id=8881> [accessed on May 24 2010].
- ²² Tadić’s perception of Kosovo is considered to be influenced considerably by his father Ljubomir Tadić. Tadić Senior, who has been one of Serbia’s leading intellectuals, was part of the group of 8 professors ousted from the Law Faculty by Tito in 1975. While being one of the founders of the DS and remaining a staunch supporter of Serbian rapprochement to the EU, Tadić senior is also a member of SANU, and his views on Kosovo have been influenced by Dobrica Ćosić—who remains a close friend of his. Boris Tadić has also been influenced significantly by his close advisor on Kosovo from 2005–2007, the historian Dušan Bataković.
- ²³ *B92*, “Tadić encourages Serbs to vote,” October 2005, at <http://www.b92.net/info/>.
- ²⁴ Boris Tadić, “Obracanje naciji povodom izbora na Kosovu i Metohiji” 5 October 2005, at <http://www.parliament.gov.rs/mwc/default.asp?c=303000&g=20061216123858&lng=lat&hs1=0> [accessed on May 24 2010].
- ²⁵ The Kosovar Serbs had a quota of 10 reserved seats and gained 12 additional seats. It was the latter that now went to other Kosovar Albanian parties.
- ²⁶ Popov, and Nikolić, *Vojislav Koštunica*, p. 321.
- ²⁷ The purpose of Eide’s review was to assess the standards fulfillment. Though he judged these standards not to have been met, he nevertheless advocated the commencement of status talks. He also advocated deep decentralization that would grant Serb-majority municipalities “enhanced competencies in areas such as police, justice and special competencies, going beyond those given to all other municipalities.” Belgrade and even hardliners like Jakšić were by and large satisfied with Eide’s recommendations, as they recognized the fact that things were not going as well as the international presence in Kosovo most often attempted to portray.

- ²⁸ The Belgrade leaders calculated the probability of Priština accepting such direct talks over anything more than tactical issues to be minimal. In this manner, they would be granted credit for effort, while pressure would be put on the Kosovo-Albanian leaders to accept such talks.
- ²⁹ *VIP Belgrade*, Issue 3186, (Belgrade) 13 October 2005, p. 1.
- ³⁰ Interview in *Danas*, (Belgrade) "Srbiji suverenitet, Kosovu izvršna, zakonodavna i sudska vlast," 22 September 2005. Displaced CCK leader Čović denied that this position had been adopted at the government meetings, all of which he claimed to have attended, and where no such stand had been agreed upon. He accused Koštunica of having started to make secret arrangements around Kosovo. See ICG Balkan Briefing No.46, (Belgrade) "Serbia's New Government: Turning from Europe," 31 May 2007.
- ³¹ B92 (Belgrade), "Cabinet Rushing Through Kosovo Resolution," 15 November 2005, at <http://www.b92.net/eng>.
- ³² *VIP*, Issue 3210, (Belgrade) 16 November 2005, p. 2.
- ³³ *VIP*, Issue 3210, (Belgrade) 16 November 2005, p. 1.
- ³⁴ *VIP*, Issue 3210, (Belgrade) 16 November and Issue 3216, 24 November 2005.
- ³⁵ As mentioned above, Đindić's proposal also entailed the provision of a possible partition of Kosovo should the creation of two entities not succeed.
- ³⁶ *VIP*, Issue 3216, (Belgrade) 24 November 2005, p. 2.
- ³⁷ *VIP*, Issue 3211, (Belgrade) 17 November 2005, p. 2.
- ³⁸ The Contact Group consists of the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Italy, and Russia and was first set up in response to the war in Bosnia in the early 1990s. The Contact Group includes four of the five Permanent Members of the UN Security Council.
- ³⁹ *VIP*, Issue 3218, (Belgrade) 28 November 2005, p. 3.
- ⁴⁰ *Glas Javnosti*, "Prepućavanje dva kabineta," (Belgrade) 24 November 2005, at <http://arhiva.glas-javnosti.rs/arhiva/2005/11/24/srpski/T05112301.shtml> [accessed May 24, 2010].
- ⁴¹ *VIP*, Issue 3216 (Belgrade) 24 November 2005.
- ⁴² *Večernje novosti* (Belgrade) 17 November 2005, at <http://www.novosti.rs/code/navigate.php?Id=2> [accessed on May 24 2010].
- ⁴³ UNOSEK, "Guiding principles of the Contact Group for a settlement of the status of Kosovo" at <http://www.unosek.org/docref/Contact%20Group%20-%20Ten%20Guiding%20principles%20for%20Ahtisaari.pdf>.
- ⁴⁴ The negotiation team further consisted of Leon Koen, Dusan Bataković, Slobodan Samardžić, Aleksandar Simić, Pedrag Simić and Sanda Rašković-Ivić.
- ⁴⁵ Aleksandar Vučić, in *VIP*, Issue 3210, (Belgrade) 6 November 2005.
- ⁴⁶ These included issues such as returns and protection of the sites of the Serbian Orthodox Monasteries. Other technical issues not discussed ini-

tially were overall minority rights, and more sensitive issues such as policing, Customs and the judiciary.

⁴⁷ *VIP*, (Belgrade) Issue 3338, (Belgrade) 22 May 2006.

⁴⁸ *VIP*, Issue 3370, (Belgrade) 5 July 2006, p. 3.

⁴⁹ ICG Balkan Reports, No. 177, (Priština) "Kosovo Status: Delay Is Risky" 10 November 2006, p. 1.

⁵⁰ See ICG Europe Briefing, No. 44 (Belgrade) "Serbia's New Constitution: Democracy Going Backwards," 8 November 2006, for more on the process to pass the constitution.

⁵¹ BK TV, (Belgrade) 17 September 2006.

⁵² UNOSEK, "Statement of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the future status process for Kosovo—10th November 2006" at <http://www.unosek.org/unosek/en/press.html> [accessed on May 24, 2010].

⁵³ With 81 of the 250 parliamentary seats, the Serbian Radical Party (SRS) again emerged as the largest party. The Democratic Party (DS), followed with 60 seats and the Democratic Party of Serbia (DSS) received 33 seats; G17+, nineteen; Socialist Party of Serbia (SPS), fourteen; New Serbia (NS), ten; Liberal Democratic Party, six; League of Social Democrats of Vojvodina, four; Alliance of Vojvodina Hungarians, Civic Alliance and Sandžak Democratic Party, three each; Serbian Democratic Party of Renewal and United Serbia, two each; and Social Democratic Union 1, Union of Roma of Serbia, Roma Party, Demo-Christian Party of Serbia, Democratic Alliance of Croats in Vojvodina, Bošnjak Democratic Party of Sandžak, Party for Democratic Action, Movement of Veterans of Serbia, Social Liberal Party of Serbia and "no party," one each. See ICG Balkan Briefing No. 46 (Belgrade) "Serbia's New Government: Turning from Europe," 31 May 2007.

⁵⁴ *B92*, "Government in Limbo," 7 February 2007 at <http://www.b92.net/info/>. The government issued a statement on 1 February stating that "outgoing Prime Minister Vojislav Koštunica is not entitled to represent the government in regards to issues delineating Serbian state policy," and that "the proclamation of final electoral results on 25 January marked the end of the government's mandate."

⁵⁵ A strengthening of authority to the local municipalities concurrently intended to make the Kosovar Serbs less dependent on Belgrade.

⁵⁶ William Montgomery, "The Ahtisaari Proposal," *B92, Insight* (Belgrade) 12 February 2007 at <http://www.b92.net/info> [accessed on May 24 2010].

⁵⁷ "Draft Resolution of the National Assembly of Serbia" *B92, Insight* (Belgrade) 14 February 2007 at <http://www.b92.net/info/> [accessed on May 24 2010].

⁵⁸ Ahtisaari submitted a short four page report entitled "Report of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General on Kosovo's Future Status," as well as longer document entitled "Comprehensive Proposal for the Kosovo Status Settlement" (63 pages) both can be found at www.unosek.org/docref/report-english.pdf [accessed on May 24 2010].

- ⁵⁹ According to the International Crisis Group, parliament voted in a new government at 23:32, less than a half-hour before the deadline. ICG Balkan Briefing No. 46, (Belgrade) "Serbia's New Government: Turning from Europe," 31 May 2007.
- ⁶⁰ The DS/G17+ faction had 16 mandates versus the DSS/NS 7 mandates, but the large SRS majority in the parliament made it difficult for the pro-Europeans to get through their issues.
- ⁶¹ Koštunica, Speech on 15 May 2007, at <http://www.srbija.gov.rs/vesti> [accessed on May 24 2010].
- ⁶² Resolution following UN Special Envoy Martti Ahtisaari's "Comprehensive Proposal for the Kosovo Status Settlement" and continuation of negotiations on the future status of Kosovo-Metohija. Available at <http://www.srbija.gov.rs/vesti/specijal.php?id=63804> [accessed on May 24 2010].
- ⁶³ ICG Europe Report No.188 (Priština) "Kosovo Countdown: A Blueprint for Transition," 6 December 2007.
- ⁶⁴ *Cesid* (Belgrade), predsjednički izbori februar 2008, at <http://www.cesid.org/>.
- ⁶⁵ *Blic* (Belgrade) "Samardžić: Nikada nisam govorio o podeli Kosova," 31 March 2008, at <http://www.blic.rs/Vesti/Politika/36069/Samardzic-Nikada-nisam-govorio-o-podeli-Kosova-komentari> [accessed on May 24 2010].
- ⁶⁶ *B92* (Belgrade) "Confusion in Ruling Coalition over Kosovo, EU," 3 March 2008, at <http://www.b92.net/info> [accessed on May 24 2010]. Dinkić further stated that "I cannot help the Kosovo Albanians because I cannot lead the economic policy there, I cannot get there without armored escort and KFOR."
- ⁶⁷ One condition being that Serbia needed to fulfill its obligations to the Hague before it could be put into force. The pro-European government showed its determination to honor this agreement by delivering Župljanin and more spectacularly, Radovan Karadžić shortly after coming to power. The SAA has still not been signed, but is expected to happen in the course of 2010.
- ⁶⁸ The "For a European Serbia" ticket received 102 mandates, SRS 29.22% and 77 Seats. The DSS/NS ticket received 11.34% of votes and 30 mandates. SPS/PUPS/JS got 7.57 and 20 mandates. See Republika Srbija Republička Izborna Komisija 29 April 2010 "saopštenje za javnost," http://www.rik.parlament.gov.rs/latinica/saopstenja_frames.htm [accessed on May 24 2010].
- ⁶⁹ While this has primarily been a marriage of convenience and necessity, there have been attempts to portray this as a reconciliation process. The SPS still has a long way to go to reach its aspirations to become a more European social democratic party and it remains to be seen if it manages to leave behind its Milošević legacy.
- ⁷⁰ See ICG Europe Report No. 196, *Kosovo's Fragile Transition*, 25 September 2008 and Europe Report No. 200, *Serb Integration in Kosovo: Taking the Plunge*, 12 May 2009 for more on the issue.
- ⁷¹ At the time of writing, he still remained Mitrovica.

- ⁷² ICG Europe Report, *Serb Integration in Kosovo*, p. 13.
- ⁷³ See for instance the statement by KFOR Commander, Markus Bentler, "Security Situation in Kosovo is Stable," *B92*, 2 January 2010 at http://www.b92.net/eng/news/politics-article.php?yyyy=2010&mm=01&dd=02&nav_id=64202 [accessed on May 24 2010].
- ⁷⁴ *Danas*, (Belgrade) "Interview with Oliver Ivanović," 15 August 2008, http://www.danas.rs/danasrs/drustvo/terazije/nema_zvanicnih_kontakata_s_privremenim_kosovskim_institucijama.14.html?news_id=136753 [accessed on May 24 2010]. Excerpts from the interview are also available on the Ministry's homepage, indicating that it is state policy rather than isolated statements by one minister.
- ⁷⁵ See, for instance, Bodganovic in "Minister Reiterates opposition to Kosovo Vote," 10 November 2009, at http://www.b92.net/eng/news/politics-article.php?yyyy=2009&mm=11&dd=10&nav_id=62933 [accessed on May 24 2010].
- ⁷⁶ 23.62% in Gracanica according to the Serbian Helsinki Committee. "Kosovo Elections: a test of maturity," in *Helsinki Bulletin*, No. 46, November 2009, at <http://www.helsinki.org.rs/doc/HB-No46.pdf> [accessed on May 24 2010], p. 5. There has been little information emanating about the percentage of Kosovar Serb voting in the Kosovo elections, and numbers are conflicting. In a recent interview, Serbian Minister for Kosovo, Goran Bogdanovic claims the figure of over 23% turnout in Gracanica to be wrong, claiming it to be "about 5%." The Kosovar CEC only has turnout figures until 15:30 on 13 December—date of the second election round, at which Gracanica is listed with a turnout of 14.22%, and Štrpce at 23.44% (some of whom are Kosovar Albanian). See *Central Election Commision*, "Voter Percentage," <http://www.kqz-ks.org/SKQZ-WEB/en/njoftime/materiale/komunikate/daljanevotime2.pdf> [accessed on May 24 2010].
- ⁷⁷ *B92*, 8 November 2009, "28 pct of K. Serbs to participate in elections," http://www.b92.net/eng/news/politics-article.php?yyyy=2009&mm=11&dd=08&nav_id=62887 [accessed on May 24 2010].
- ⁷⁸ *Politika*, "Intervju: Goran Bogdanović, ministar za KiM," 29 November 2009, at <http://www.politika.rs/rubrike/Politika/Vec-primenjujemo-nov-pristup-problemima-na-Kosmetu.lt.html> [accessed on May 24 2010].
- ⁷⁹ *Politika*, "Intervju: Goran Bogdanović, ministar za KiM," 29 November 2009.
- ⁸⁰ Interview, member of the diplomatic community in Kosovo.
- ⁸¹ *B92*, "EU Lifts Visa Restrictions for Serbia," 30 November 2009, at <http://www.b92.net/eng/news/politics-article.php?mm=11&dd=30&yyyy=2009> [accessed on May 24 2010].
- ⁸² *Guardian*, "Serbia Makes Formal Application to Join EU," 22 December 2009 at <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2009/dec/22/serbia-eu-application> [accessed on May 24 2010].

- ⁸³ *Balkan Insight*, "EU Blocks Interim Trade Agreement," 7 December 2009 at <http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/main/news/24222/> [accessed on May 24 2010].
- ⁸⁴ *B92*, "EU Unblocks Trade Part of SAA," 7 December 2009, at <http://www.b92.net/eng/news/politics-article.php?mm=12&dd=7&yyyy=2009> [accessed on May 24 2010].
- ⁸⁵ *Blic*, "Diplomatski rat za nove pregovore o Kosovu," 11 January 2010, at <http://www.blic.rs/Vesti/Tema-Dana/171815/Diplomatski-rat-za-nove-pregovore-o-Kosovu-> [accessed on May 24 2010].
- ⁸⁶ An initiative that Priština has already rejected. See *B92*, "Priština wants 'equal status' in Sarajevo," http://www.b92.net/eng/news/in_focus.php?id=91&start=0&nav_id=64417 [accessed on May 24 2010]. While they may be willing to discuss some of the practical challenges that Priština and Belgrade face, Priština is unlikely to agree to discuss the status question.
- ⁸⁷ *Blic*, "Diplomatski rat za nove pregovore o Kosovu."
- ⁸⁸ *Politika* "Intervju: Tomislav Nikolić," 12 September 2008, at <http://www.politika.rs/rubrike/Politika/SHeshelj-nije-zeleo-da-udjemo-u-vlast.lt.html> [accessed on May 24 2010].

Inter-ethnic Dialogue between Serbs and Albanians in Serbia/Kosovo, 1996–2008

Steinar Bryn

In this chapter, I will tell a story. It begins with how the Nansen Dialogue, a method of interethnic dialogue, developed from 1995 to 1997 with participants from ex-Yugoslavia in Lillehammer, Norway, was introduced in Priština in the fall of 1997. I will show how this method stimulated Serbian-Albanian dialogue up until March 1999 and how it was reintroduced already in 2000, in spite of the painful memories on both sides from the war and its aftermath. These dialogue meetings focused mainly on understanding what happened and why.

As the conflict spread into South Serbia (2000) and Northwest Macedonia (2001), so did the dialogue seminars. By showing patience and commitment, as well as sustainability, the Nansen Dialogue built its reputation and slowly became able to recruit more strategically selected participants on a high municipal level. These individuals were chosen because of their connection to local institutions and because they therefore had an arena where they could implement change (a school, a newspaper, the local municipality etc.).

This chapter will describe some of the particularities of the Nansen Dialogue that made both sides feel more secure to share their stories, and how this increased the feeling of equality and respect among the participants. The Nansen Dialogue, as it developed, became characterized by a solid academic analysis of the conflict itself, an effort to deconstruct the meaning of identities and the process to build a stronger relationship among the participants.

We cannot claim to have had much impact on the participants' political beliefs and aspirations. But many of them learned that political difference could co-exist in a democracy, and it is therefore a valuable lesson learned that if Serbia wants to develop into a truly multi-ethnic state, dialogue can be a tool that can increase the understanding and the respect between the different ethnic groups, such an ethnic tolerance is

a precondition for a democratic development in a state still marked by ethnic politics.

This is not a success story, but we moved beyond the pure dialogue work and answered, what next? What next became small successes in the field of repatriation to mixed villages, integrated education and ethnic cooperation in divided municipalities. When internationals claim that Serbs and Albanians don't want to talk to each other, our records show that they are simply wrong. I have spent the best part of my last 13 years listening to them doing exactly that. It is my firm conviction that more could have been accomplished over these years had dialogue and reconciliation been a higher priority in the peace building effort in the region, in Bosnia-Herzegovina as well as in Serbia and Kosovo.

Historical Background

In 1994, Lillehammer hosted the Winter Olympic Games. That brought the municipality of Lillehammer symbolically closer to Sarajevo, the host of the Winter Olympic Games in 1984. During the games in Lillehammer, an effort was made to take the spirit of international solidarity seriously. This resulted in Lillehammer Olympic Aid, a joint effort that raised 71 million Norwegian kroner. Most of this money was allocated to projects in Sarajevo, bringing the brutality of the war even closer to home. The director of the Nansen Academy in 1994, Inge Eidsvåg, tells it this way¹:

In July 1994 I visited Sarajevo to see the rehabilitation of the paraplegic Center at the Koševo Hospital, financed by Lillehammer Olympic Aid. This was before the Dayton agreement, and Sarajevo was under siege. After five days I left the city with strong impressions. On my return to Norway I immediately contacted Norwegian Red Cross and Norwegian Church Aid to explore whether they were interested in cooperating on a dialogue project for people from former Yugoslavia. The reply was very positive. A few weeks later we had worked out a tentative programme and applied for financial support from the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Later on the International Peace Research Institute, Oslo was invited into the steering committee. In September 1995 we welcomed the first group of 14 students from former Yugoslavia. In one year we had transformed idea into reality.

We simply asked "How can we contribute?" and as an academy, the answer was to create an educational project where we invited potential

leaders from the Western Balkans to sit and talk about what happened, what went wrong and how can the relationships be repaired sufficiently to create a better future. In 1995, the project “Democracy, Human Rights and Peaceful Conflict Resolution” started. The intention was to create an educational program motivating and strengthening the participants to work for peace and reconciliation upon returning home. In the first group, the participants were mainly recruited from Bosnia-Herzegovina. But we realized early on how things were intertwined with each other, and the seminar in the spring of 1996 had participants from Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia, Kosovo, and Macedonia.

We did not have a reconciliation handbook: through trial and error we discovered what worked and what did not work. During the first year it was a high reliance on external lecturers coming in to “tell” the participants what was wrong in the Balkans, before it became obvious to us that most of the participants had this knowledge themselves. The main strength of the project became not what they could “learn” from Norway, but the fact that (1) The Nansen Academy provided a space where they could come together and compare notes—simply do dialogue; (2) They could analyse what happened and why in a more neutral space, remote from the conflict area and pressure from family and colleagues; (3) They could interact with participants having other ethnic identities in multiple ways, transforming their perception of the Other to become much more than just the representative of another ethnic group; and (4) Through staying together for three months, relationships and friendships developed across ethnic divide. These relationships were later utilized in building up the Nansen Dialogue Network that established dialogue centers in 10 different cities in ex-Yugoslavia (Osijek, Banja Luka, Sarajevo, Mostar, Podgorica, Priština, Mitrovica, Belgrade, Bujanovac, and Skopje).

The need for dialogue²

One consequence of the brutal breakdown of Yugoslavia was an equivalent communication breakdown. Many people growing up in Yugoslavia before 1990 seem to have memories of travels, festivals, conferences, summer holidays and other gatherings in ex-Yugoslavia. In the 1990s, as the violent conflicts escalated, checkpoints and new borders prevented people, in the worst cases, from even traveling across their own town. This brutal irony for people with Yugoslav passports which

in the past had granted access both to the East and to the West, was a direct consequence of the violent break up of Yugoslavia.

The participants started to come from Zagreb, Banja Luka, Sarajevo, Mostar, Podgorica, Priština, Belgrade, and Skopje. By sitting together in Lillehammer it was rather easy to discover how nationalistic propaganda operated in all previous republics.³ Since the initial seminar lasted for three months, the participants had plenty of time to compare notes. They lived together in a very compact environment with educational facilities, the dining hall and the dormitory within a few square meters. The Academy was located in a rather small and boring town with most of the local people staying in their homes.⁴ There really was nowhere to hide. By listening to each other, it became obvious how their own nationalistic media had given a one-sided propaganda, and particularly had not been informing them of all the atrocities committed by their own people against the Others.

Although there were heated debates (yes, debates!) among the participants, it was fairly easy, over time, to recognize that in order to get the full picture one had to listen to other stories and other explanations. A Belgrade person could not exclude the Zagreb story, not to mention the Sarajevo story. Neither could a Zagreb person exclude the Belgrade story. This does not mean that every republic contributed equally to the breakup of Yugoslavia, it just means that a complete analysis must include different geographical perspectives and historical narratives. At one point, we started to name the seminars in Lillehammer "Expanding Horizons."

I have over the years seldom experienced that the participants changed their fundamental political beliefs or their political goals, but I have often seen that they change their perception of "the Other." Their understanding of the world was simply becoming more inclusive. As Dragoslav Djurasković, Kosovo expressed it in an interview on Redaksjon 21, NRK in October 1998:

Very soon. I saw that the meaning of this project was completely different ...to produce a way of thinking which includes understanding the other side. A way of thinking that is not usual here in this area...and that's the reason why I think that it was a very good idea in the very beginning to make this project in Norway in Lillehammer, far away from the area of conflict. The first step if you want to fight against the others is to dehumanize ... the other side. Such seminars establish a situation in which we see the other side as human beings.

In our invitation to the seminars in Norway we deliberately stressed that these seminars were not negotiations. Although not knowing it at the time, we developed a mode of communication different from debate and negotiations. When consulting the literature at a later time, we saw that our experience is far from unique—rather it fits with how others describe the same processes.⁵

Dialogue is a process of genuine interaction through which human beings listen to each other deeply enough to be changed by what they learn. Each makes a serious effort to take the others' concerns into her or his own picture, even when disagreement persists. No participant gives up her or his identity, but each recognizes enough of the other's valid human claims that he or she will act differently toward the other.

The need for analysis

The dialogue groups themselves were not open-ended, but often focused on the break up of Yugoslavia, and a very specific methodology was used to analyze the causes of the conflict: Dessler's methodology. This is well described by my colleague and partner in most of the dialogue groups between 1996 and 2001, Dan Smith, then director of PRIO, now Secretary General of International Alert.⁶ Smith told NRK, "I am not so focused on who is right and who is wrong, but more on how we got here and how we can get out of here."

Smith has described one of the main challenges in these situations to be the relationship between intellect and emotion, "while many of them had a sincere wish for dialogue, mutual understanding and an end to the violence and bloodshed, many also, not surprisingly, had deeply held views and feelings about right and wrong in the wars—on which side justice lay and who had perpetrated the worst crimes."⁷

Dessler's methodology, or typology as Smith calls it, provided a way of talking about the causes of the break up of Yugoslavia that both sorted the causes and created an analytical distance to the events. Smith used a modified version of Dessler, focusing on background causes, mobilization targets, triggers and catalysts.

Smith himself expressed some surprise that such a neat theoretical model actually could work in a "conflict-group," but that is his main point—it worked. It functioned as a smoke screen between the participants and the narratives they were sharing and events they were discussing. It simply opened the door to talk about what happened and

why, without stirring up the strongest emotions. The participants experienced first hand that it is possible to talk about the hard stuff.

Smith notes that toward the end of this process the groups had made a fairly sophisticated overview of the different causes—and this overview had a striking similarity from group to group. As if laying the puzzle called “The Break Up of Yugoslavia.”

Building Relationships

The participants could not sit in the classroom all day long. The program developed included an understanding of social, physical and cultural needs. The face-to-face meeting became important also in various social activities. It is important to deal with difficult issues in dialogue. But it can be equally important to know when to take a break and go bowling or swimming. This can help release tension but it also provides new arenas where people get to know each other in new ways. We deliberately used the opportunities Lillehammer provided for skiing, dancing, cultural performances, museum visits or just going out for a beer. Slowly the others grew out of being the representatives of other ethnic groups, and showed the human range of multiple identities. Some even fell in love across the ethnic divide.

In a fairly natural way, people would form friendships according to interests in music, sports, culture, outdoors, drinking, and bashing the Norwegian ways. These relationships were brought with them back home, and became a backbone in the soon to be the Nansen Dialogue Network. This experience of the importance of building relationships has influenced the work of the Nansen Dialogue over the last ten years in such a dramatic way that we can say we do not work from the political paradigm of power, but from the paradigm of building relationships. Politics is not about getting the access to power, but about securing the equal distribution of resources and opportunities among people who live in relationships marked by mutual respect for each other.

Reflection on Ethnic Identities

Lillehammer provides plenty of detours into the question of identity. Maihaugen (national museum) and the opening ceremony of the Lillehammer Olympic Games provide plenty of raw material to discuss “Is there a Norwegian identity?” and ethnic identity in general. The distance from home made it easier to understand Fredrik Barth’s defini-

tion, "Ethnicity is the art of producing differences"⁸ and new constellations/confrontations developed between the Balkan groups and the "Norwegians." Although many could appreciate aspects of Norwegian life, the visit to Norway also made them appreciate aspects of their own common culture (hospitality, food, family, noise, etc.)

The experience of the Other as more than just an ethnic other, was made possible through these varied experiences. By seeing oneself in many mirrors, not only the ethnic, the understanding of oneself expanded. This does not mean that the ethnic is done away with. People still have an ethnic or national identity, but it becomes much less dominant in one's understanding of the identity of both self and other.

Norway is not seen as an example to follow when it comes to respect for other ethnicities, but they find the Norwegian debates stimulating (1) Which flag to use on the 17th of May—is it a national holiday or a celebration of the constitution? (2) Can a multiethnic state have a state church? (3) Why do Norwegian schools segregate—in Oslo you find some schools with a remarkably high percentage of non-ethnic Norwegians and others with too high a percentage of ethnic Norwegians? (4) What does it take to become a Norwegian? And (5) What belongs to the state and what belongs to the nation?

Living in a closed community with strong ethnic conflicts, the ethnic identity might seem fixed. But looking at it from afar, the participants in the Nansen Dialogue see how their own identities are going through changes. A man in Sarajevo might have presented himself as a Yugoslav in 1980, then as a Muslim. Ten years later he is first a Muslim and then a Bosnian, Yugoslavia is fading away. Five years later he might be a Bosniak.

In 1981, 1,219,045 declared themselves as Yugoslavs, as opposed to 273,077 ten years earlier.⁹ Today they don't have a state. Over the last 18 years a Serb in Kosovo has lived in 4 or 5 different countries (depending on how you look at it) without having changed address and his identity has shifted accordingly from more Yugoslav to a much stronger Kosovo-Serb identity. In general, Croats have become more Catholic and the Serbs more orthodox over the last 20 years. And what about all the people from mixed families?¹⁰ This is only to show that ethnic identities are not fixed, not even in ex-Yugoslavia. A Nansen coordinator in Sarajevo has written eloquently about this issue and says simply that when foreigners ask him what he is, he refuses to answer the question since it obviously only serves their purpose of putting him in a box where he does not belong.¹¹

Cleven accepts that “Experiences of the narrative processes and the face to face nature of the dialogue and associated social activities establish ties between people on a new basis,” but then asks “Do these ties last? How well do they hold up when people return to their home communities? If no one in your home community can relate to your experiences, or they are even hostile to your experience, then one may quickly fall back to previous relationships and patterns of behavior.”¹² This became the challenge. How to make the dialogue experience available to more people? How to build up a sustainable Nansen Dialogue Network?

The Herzeg Novi seminars 1997–99

It became obvious that these dialogue sessions in Lillehammer were rather exclusive. One might expand one’s horizons, but it was very difficult to transfer this into action back home. The lack of any kind of network support, and the lack of any arena of action made several of the Serbian and Albanian participants from Priština gather back home as a Lillehammer-group in Kosovo. They initiated the first Herzeg Novi seminar in November 1997.¹³ Now it was not three months, it was a three-day seminar. What could one accomplish in such short time? The Lillehammer participants put their own trustworthiness on the line when recruiting their friends and colleagues. The participants traveled 10 hours by bus from Priština to Herzeg Novi. Luckily this first seminar succeeded in such a way that it became easier to recruit people to the next seminars. Seven dialogue buses drove out of Priština the next 14 months.

These dialogue seminars took place as the situation on the ground got worse. Many date the start of the war back to November 1997 as the KLA started to control territory in the Drenica valley. The attacks on Prekaz village were early March 1998, culminating in the killing of 58 people on 5 March. During the summer of 1998, there were heavy attacks from the Serb army and police on what they defined as KLA villages. We saw the increased number of displaced Albanians (around 250,000) and the complete destruction of hundreds of Albanian villages, particularly in the buffer zone along the Albanian border. There was a constant, but still slightly unreal, threat of bombing. Although there was dramatic destruction of property, there was no massive killing at this time.¹⁴ Several of the participants expressed fear and had direct

contact with war-like conditions, although Priština itself was not a war zone at this time.

In retrospect, it is fair to say that both Dan Smith and I had used the Lillehammer seminars as a training ground for our own facilitation. This had given us a solid local knowledge and a certain trust that it would work. Smith had seen the struggle between intellect and emotions in every seminar since 1995. As “these thoughts and emotions were intensified for many of the participants...by things they had seen, by what had happened to friends or family, by the experience of being forced to leave their homes...how could they be expected to sustain a dialogue with others on different sides of the conflict, with different views, who had also lived through the nightmares?”¹⁵

Based on the Lillehammer experience a certain method was developing: dialogue (sharing how the conflict affected their lives), analysis of the situation (applying Dessler’s methodology to the Kosovo crisis), relationship-building (dinner, dancing, boat trips, music) and discussions of ethnic identity informed and made up the content of these shorter seminars. The organizers and the facilitators believed it would work, and it did, although during the first seminar both groups believed they had been fooled into a propaganda trap.

We would never have been able to start these seminars in Kosovo without the small Lillehammer group that had gone through certain processes themselves, which had sensitized them toward inter-ethnic thinking. They realized the need for improved communication. They put their own integrity on the line when recruiting the participants to the first seminar. By doing this they found a way to sustain their own Lillehammer experience in the midst of living in a country approaching a brutal war.

It is very unlikely that, at this point, local Serbs and local Albanians would have initiated such seminars. They lived in a divided world, where even communication with each other was a suspicious activity. The parallel systems had developed over time in Kosovo, and created a deep divide, not only in institutional and social life, but also in their perceptions of reality. Given this starting point, the difficulties with even recruiting participants must be appreciated. Why should anyone spend a whole weekend with the “Other” who has destroyed one’s possibilities to live a good life? Well, a good answer is “To make the Other aware of exactly that.”

In this period (1997–1999), it was obviously the Serbs who felt strongest, although they felt under extreme pressure both from the Albanian and from the international community. Nevertheless, it was easier to recruit Serbs to the seminars. One might argue that they had the most to gain if the problems could be solved through dialogue. On the other hand, it was obvious that the participating Serbs heard stories they had never heard before; so the Albanians had an obvious gain from at least being listened to. At this time, it was Albanians who would cancel out in the last moment.

The last Herzeg Novi seminar before the war was organized in the middle of March 1999. This seminar was filmed and shown on Brennpunkt, NRK on 20 April 1999.¹⁶ At the beginning of March 1999, a few hundred people had participated in Nansen activities in Pristina. We were rather optimistic. Most of the participants claimed that this had been the first time ever that they had sat down with the other side for three days to discuss the situation. Many added that they had never even sat down for three hours for *any* purpose. An illustration of the optimism was the renting of a dialogue space where we paid 36 000 DM on 1 March 1999, one year advance. The office closed three weeks later and that one was never reopened.

Restarting the seminars after the 1999 War

It was hard to restart the dialogue after the war in 1999, and it took about a year before the people who organized the seminars in 1997–99 actually met in Ohrid, Macedonia, in May 2000. The first gathering of Serbs and Albanians in which I participated was on the roof of the OSCE building in Mitrovica South in October that year. But sooner than expected, we could restart the “traditional” dialogue seminars with participants from Mitrovica. The focus had shifted from Priština to Mitrovica, since Priština to a large extent had experienced reversed ethnic cleansing (during 1999–2000).

A series of Mitrovica seminars were organized near Lake Ohrid in Macedonia, in the mountains in Bulgaria, and along the Adriatic coast in Montenegro. Altogether around 200 persons participated. These seminars were less focused on the break-up of Yugoslavia and more focused on the Serbian/Albanian conflict. They often followed the pattern of sharing how the war had affected their personal lives. Several of the participants had tragic stories to tell about lost family members, burned down houses, destroyed villages, lost opportunities. The need

to talk was obvious, at times one could notice how two set of tables (often ten on each side) moved closer toward each other during the day, as a sign of the engagement of the speakers. In one seminar for journalists, two of the participants recognized that they had been in the same battle in April 1999, trying to kill each other. Over coffee three years later they were glad they had not done so.

In the beginning, the participants would take separate buses out of Kosovo, but join in the same bus across the border. The fear of not being a good Serb or not being a good Albanian was very strong. This also put pressure on the organizers.¹⁷ One method was particularly developed during the Mitrovica seminars. The two parties were invited to ask each other questions on the condition that they spent plenty of time preparing the questions as well as preparing the answers. These questions would often be very specific—How do you feel about what happened on a specific day? Do you feel guilty? Do you feel any responsibility? There was a strong need on both sides to hear which actions the others acknowledged happened, and took responsibility and accepted the guilt for.

Mitrovica was not a completely divided city before the war in 1999; nor was it divided as a direct consequence of the war. It was a series of clashes and incidents that followed throughout 1999 and into 2000 that finally divided the city. Although the citizens had spent only a few years apart, the curiosity about everyday life on the other side was high. How much is the coffee? How many hours of electricity do you have? How much water? Internet-access?—I got the feeling that both sides felt the other had gotten the better deal. Much of this was corrected in direct conversations and there was also a sense of more balance in the room, compared to the pre-bombing seminars, where the Albanians dominated the verbal attacks.

While using the method of asking each other questions, a Serb leader from Mitrovica North asked, “Why did you not help us last winter when the electricity was cut off in our villages?” This was a rhetorical question asking for the admission of “we didn’t help you because we wanted you to move.” Soft ethnic cleansing. The surprising answer was that electricity was cut off in Albanian villages too. The Serbs had been convinced that the cut-off had been ethnically motivated. In further conversation with each other they discovered that an Irish company cut off electricity to everyone who did not pay for the services.

One could argue that now it was the Albanians who would gain the most from showing inter-ethnic tolerance and from participating in

these seminars, but Serbs would also gain by informing Albanians under which conditions Serbs in enclaves were living. But without doubt the Albanian side was easier to mobilize for participation, and if someone cancelled in the last minute, it would now be a Serb.

In the years 1996–99, I seldom heard any references to the historic period before World War Two. After the war in 1999, I seldom heard references to the period before 1999. I mention this to challenge the general opinion that Balkan people are just too full of history. The focus on the part of the Albanians was on the spring of 1999 and then history ended, and often for the Serbs, it sounded to me as if they thought history started on 10 June 1999.¹⁸

Pre-March 1999, Albanians were attacking, and Serbs trying to justify the existing system. Post-1999, the Serbs were attacking and the Albanians were defending the changes. A question often asked by Albanians to Serbs was “Why do you not accept the new realities of Kosovo?” The Serbs claimed these realities were forced upon them, and compared their rejection of the current system with the Albanian rejection of the Serbian state pre-1999. A certain pendulum swing had taken place, although the Albanians would not accept the comparison. “Nothing will be worse than under Milošević.”

I felt that the need from the participants to express themselves had increased, and more than before it became obvious that no energizers, icebreakers or simulations were necessary. The conflict itself immediately opened all doors. Often people tell me that I must have a difficult job. I am not so sure. Participants from Kosovo have nothing to lose. Dialogue around a conflict at any given Norwegian work place might be more difficult, since most of the actors try to keep their face and positions, and feel they have too much to lose. The conflict in Kosovo was by now an open bloody wound. Dialogue is not as difficult as people think, when the parties agree that they have a conflict.

These Mitrovica seminars slowly gained more and more respect and would draw participants with defined local power. They culminated in January 2006 when 25 Serbian and Albanian leaders from Mitrovica were gathered in Lillehammer and I received a telephone from UNMIK: “Where is everybody?” The dialogue meeting had been planned for two weeks, with the first week focusing on building relations. As the first week came to an end, the sad news that Ibrahim Rugova had died reached us, and as some of the politicians had to go home for the funeral, the rest found it improper to continue dialogue with the Serbs as their people were in mourning.

No operative goals were developed during these seminars, but there are Nansen alumni in Mitrovica who can be mobilized if the situation on the ground changes. The current situation is so locked that no official dialogue seminar can be organized without risks for some of the participants. To work in a political climate full of far more powerful events than dialogue seminars requires patience and generational thinking (change does not happen overnight, but maybe over a generation) becomes necessary. Probably the most important effect of the Nansen Dialogue is that a symbol of integration, openness, tolerance, non-violent communication and a more inclusive way of thinking has been present and coexisted with nationalistic propaganda and the building of hatred on both sides in some of the most war torn areas of Europe since World War Two.

Parallel Stories

Many observers of ex-Yugoslavia have discovered, as Laura Silber and Allan Little describe it: "To work in former Yugoslavia is to enter a world of parallel truths. Wherever you go, you encounter the same resolute conviction that everything that had befallen the region is always someone else's fault, except one's own side.... Each nation has embraced a separate orthodoxy in which it is uniquely the victim and never the perpetrator."¹⁹ Ramet says it even more simply, describing Serbs and Albanians "Two ethnic communities with distinct languages and religious traditions lay claims to the same historical territory with competing historical arguments as evidence."²⁰

Julie Mertus' book *Kosovo: How myths and truths started a war* explores in depth how Serbs and Albanians have had different views about major events such as the Albanian demonstrations in 1981, the Martinović case (1986), the Paraćin massacre and the alleged poisoning of school children. Helena Zdravković, in her paper "Historical Victimage of Kosovo Serbs and Albanians" examines how and why victimage, identity and nationalism "are produced through everyday discursive practices of Serbs and Albanians in Kosovo."²¹

Mertus describes well our starting point:

Serbs and Albanians structure their lives around Truths that are closely linked to their identity but that may have nothing (or everything) to do with factual truth or lies. In this context, the opposite of Truth is not necessarily a lie; it is a competing Truth linked to an alternative self-image. The problem, I realized, is that local political leaders were

manipulating particularly malignant strains of national Truths, aided by inaccurate and distorted media reports and deteriorating economic and social conditions.²²

Based on the seminars described above the Albanian position could be summarized as follows:

- 1: The Albanians were oppressed in Yugoslavia particularly from 1945 to 1974 and from 1989 to 1999, when the police/state administration was dominated by Serbs;
- 2: Albanians have wanted independence for Kosovo since 1991, and did not recognize the institutions of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia;
- 3: NATO's bombing was a necessary humanitarian intervention to prevent a well planned ethnic cleansing of Albanians;
- 4: Revenge against Serbs must be understood on the backdrop of Albanian suffering during the war;
- 5: The international community has not followed up properly— independence will make it possible to develop a more stabile and economically viable state;
- 6: Continued constitutional attachment to Serbia is not an option.

The Serbian position can be summarized as follows:

- 1: Kosovo is an important part of Serbia and the centre of Serbian cultural and religious heritage;
- 2: The Serbs are surrounded by the Albanian majority, and are the most vulnerable group in Kosovo (particularly from 1974 to 1989 and from 1999 to 2008);
- 3: NATO's bombing in 1999 was founded on Western geo-strategic interests;
- 4: NATO simultaneously supported an Albanian war of independence and Albanian nationalism;
- 5: Assaults against Serbs after NATO took over proves that the international community has no interest in protecting Serb civilians, and that Albanians want an ethnically cleansed Kosovo;
- 6: Serbs will not recognize Kosovo's political institutions, but insist on belonging to Serbia;
- 7: An independent Albanian dominated Kosovo is not an option.

Dialogue and Truth

So are these positions of equal value, deserving equal respect or can one through academic discourse move closer to a common joint understanding? This is an area often misunderstood by the critics of dialogue: That dialogue workers don't care about the real truth as long as they can stimulate the conversation between the parties in conflict. An academic discourse requires a willingness on both sides to participate. Such willingness does not exist in Kosovo. Dialogue is not an alternative to academic discourse, but it is a place to start when the communication has broken down. Academic discourse is based on a mutual respect for each other's arguments—a precondition which doesn't exist in Kosovo at this time.

When you invite people to a dialogue seminar, you are not inviting them to the International Court in The Hague. Some of the participants might just come out of a period of boycotting all communication with members of the other nation.²³ Typically, the participants want the dialogue worker to be a judge, to confirm their own perceptions of reality. To do so would be a beginner's fault on the part of the dialogue facilitator if the goal is to stimulate the dialogue. This deserves some careful reflections.

A dialogue seminar is very much about making one's own life visible and understood by the others, and vice versa. The Serb and Albanian historical narratives are so exclusive, that it often comes as a surprise to Serbs that Albanians feel they have an equally strong claim to Kosovo as the Serbs have themselves. And there are Albanians who perceive Serbs as occupiers who deserve to be sent back to Serbia. When this is the starting point "allowing competing Truths to float through the air in the same space, unjudged and unquestioned, can be a revolutionary act."²⁴

To misinterpret this as meaning there is no real truth ignores the fact that it takes some talk to start talking. Dialogue is not only about the physical act of talking and listening, it is about minds opening up. It takes time for the minds to warm up, to become receptive toward other "competing truths." To invite opposing parties into a dialogue room is different from inviting them to a negotiation table. The dialogue facilitator must be able to make both sides feel safe enough to start telling their stories. If the participants starts to feel that the facilitator clearly support certain Truths, then that will interfere with the dialogue process itself and cause the one side to withdraw.

Certain dialogue facilitators believe that the participants should accept certain Truths before the dialogue process starts. An example is School for Peace in Israel, which wants the Israeli participants to accept that Palestine is an occupied territory. “But what about those who do not believe that?” I asked. “They would not come anyway.” was the answer. The Nansen Dialogue wants to include those who “would not come anyway.” To do dialogue only between the already converted is almost a futile exercise.

Sharing Truths in a dialogue space might not be that different from discussing the same issues, but in a negotiation people position themselves and become more defensive, and it is harder to see any movement in the positions.²⁵ When a mind is opening up, people may discover that there is not only one Truth, our Truth which is denied by the Other. The Other actually believes in another Truth. Like the Serb that expressed “You *really* believe we poisoned you, now I understand why you hate us.”

In my experience, such a process can lead to a direct interest in finding the “real” truth, and the joint, committed search for the real truth can often be revealing for one or both of the sides, like the Serb and Albanian who wanted to find out what had really happened in Raçak. The challenge for a dialogue facilitator is to create a space where minds start to unfold— and that means they start to open up— and some listen for the first time to alternative explanations to those communicated to them by their own families, teachers, journalists and politicians.

An illustrative example that not even “forensic” truth (i.e., the number of dead) is easily given is the research done by Mirsad Tocaka in Bosnia-Herzegovina. For a long time it was assumed that 200,000 people were killed during the war between 1992–95. It was repeated so often that it became a factoid, but nobody really knew who had figured this out—it was just assumed. The research done, culminated in a report reducing the number to around 100,000.²⁶

This is, based on my experience, the most important argument for dialogue. It is possible to develop an exclusive narrative if there is no interaction with the other. We tend to believe that people know, that people are aware of alternative explanatory frameworks, they just deny their validity—my experience is the opposite. The Serbian narrative excludes the Albanian; the Albanian narrative excludes the Serbian. Only through meetings, exposure to the Other, are these limited frameworks challenged. Neither side can assume that the parents, teachers,

journalists, politicians and religious leaders give proper information about “the Other”; rather the opposite is the case, negative stereotypes and enemy images are perpetrated and perpetuated.

The bridge-watchers²⁷ are not only watching to see if the enemy is attacking, they are also watching who of their own people are crossing the bridge to the other side—crossing the bridge means “crossing over” and becoming exposed to alternative explanations, alternative frameworks for interpreting events—and more importantly, crossing the bridge means humanizing the “other” through direct interaction.

Conflicts need incidents with contradictory explanations; like those discussed by Julie Mertus.²⁸ In July 2001 two Albanians were brutally killed in Tetovo by the Macedonian police. The Macedonian story was that two potential terrorists were killed before they did damage. The Albanian version held that two innocent people, father and son, were killed by the aggressive Macedonian police. The same tragic incident served to strengthen the enemy image on both sides. It is hard to keep a conflict alive. A conflict needs incidents like these to develop. One might speculate if the lack of inter-ethnic commissions is a deliberate effort to keep competing narratives alive.

Dialogue—more than words?

Dialogue is not a tool to solve problems like constitutional status, repatriation, economic development, and European integration. Dialogue is a tool to increase the understanding between the parties in a conflict. My argument is that dialogue and reconciliation must not become a neglected element of peace building. One must recognize that dialogue and reconciliation are a necessary part of this process. Dialogue is not an alternative to mediations or negotiations but both could benefit from a stronger dialogue component.

The first challenge for the Nansen Dialogue was to take the dialogue from the more exclusive long-term setting in Lillehammer, to a more intense short-term setting closer to home (Herzeg Novi). The Nansen Dialogue stressed, during this period, the meaning of an open dialogue about the causes of what happened and the consequences it had for people living through the conflicts and wars. This is a necessary step in reconciliation, and must be recognized as such. Still donors and other critics wanted to see more concrete results. It is nice when people come together to dialogue, but then—what? Also the coordinators in the Nansen Centers started to become more ambitious, as their position in

their respective local communities was strengthened. Is it possible to mobilize dialogue participants to take part in social change at large?

The challenge became to recruit participants who had an arena of action upon returning home; participants who belonged to institutions in society that could implement change. A much stronger criterion was then developed for the recruitment of participants (that was hardly possible in the beginning when we looked like a horse with no name), but as we built our experience we also built our reputation, particularly as a network focusing on inter-ethnic dialogue in deeply divided communities. Nansen started to symbolize dialogue, integration, openness, and tolerance in communities like Vukovar, Prijedor, Srebrenica, Bratunac, Sarajevo, Mostar, Stolac, Mitrovica, Kosovo Polje, Obiliq, Sandžak, South-Serbia, and Jegunovce, for those involved in our activities. Our patience, stamina and the fact that we were setting up local registered centers staffed by locals, and were not perceived as foreigners, gave us more credibility. So when we started to invite strategically important people in the local community, they accepted the invitation. Like the mayor, chief of the municipal administration, president of the municipal assembly, director of the local high school, editor of the local newspaper et al.

The idea was to develop concrete integrative projects. By developing more of a dialogue culture we hoped that the community would become more receptive toward integrative legislation, integrative projects, and the creation of dialogue arenas. The most prominent of such dialogue arenas is the new Fridtjof Nansen bilingual school that just opened in Jegunovce, Macedonia. Through long-term dialogue work with village leaders, teachers, parents, students, and municipal leaders, four villages that were in violent confrontation in the summer of 2001 have turned confrontation to cooperation.²⁹ NDC Osijek hopes to initiate the start of a Serb-Croatian school in Vukovar in the fall of 2009. A similar long-term effort has taken place, including heavy lobbying of both local and national politicians. For instance, in Bosnia-Herzegovina there are 52 divided schools. NDC Sarajevo has been involved on a large scale to work for a more unified school system.

Dialogue in South-Serbia; the Preševo valley

During the years 1995–2001, the Nansen Dialogue had built up a certain expertise dealing with interethnic dialogue in Kosovo and Macedonia. As the conflict intensified in Southern Serbia, the question

raised itself: Can we do something? Can we apply our experience from Kosovo and Macedonia in a useful way in South Serbia? The problem was that the previous strategy of the Nansen Dialogue was to work only in areas where previous participants in Lillehammer could prepare the ground; recruit new participants to dialogue seminars and in other ways pave the way for meaningful work. They were barefoot soldiers on the ground. In the case of South Serbia we had no connections of this kind, which explains why we were somewhat slow in responding to the escalating inter-ethnic conflict in that region.

A break came early in 2002 when representatives from NDC Serbia (Belgrade) were approached by OSCE and asked whether they could assist in training NGO workers in South Serbia. The first contacts were made and a strategy was developed. The challenge became to identify the individuals that exercised influence on political and cultural life, particularly lawyers, journalists, politicians, medical doctors, teachers and other professionals, who could make a difference.

It was obvious that the Preševo valley was marked by many of the same conditions known to us particularly from Kosovo, but also from Macedonia. A segregated society with little or no communication across the ethnic division lines, reflected in divided schools, fairly homogenous villages (Veliki Ternovac has 9,000 Albanians and hardly a single Serb), unmarked division lines creating Serbian and Albanian cafes, restaurants, shops, information systems etc. Little or no confidence and trust between the ethnic groups. This situation became intensified during the fighting in Kosovo, when historical and current arguments for joining Preševo with Kosovo surfaced. Serbs started leaving Albanian dominated areas. At the same time as they could neither understand nor respect Albanian claims to Serbian territory. The Albanians were clearly treated like second-class citizens and gathered in the areas bordering to Kosovo. Their civil status as citizens of Serbia had worsened after the war. They felt little or no hope of gaining powerful positions or any meaningful influence within the Serbian state.

There were violent outbreaks in 2000, but Nebojša Čović's plan³⁰ put a temporary stop to them and introduced more democratic ways of dealing with the problem, although the plan clearly was viewed as the result of pressure from Belgrade. The Serbs felt they gave up too much power to Albanians, and Albanians didn't feel they gained the position they deserved. Serbs felt they were becoming a minority in the very country they were a majority (how is that possible?) and the

Albanians felt that while getting local power, it was only a symbolic token in the national sense. This looked like a situation where the Nansen Dialogue could make a difference.

Nansen coordinators from NDC Serbia used their contacts in OSCE and the NGOs to identify the important people, by traveling to the region and by spending time, individual talks, many cups of coffee, they slowly succeeded in convincing important actors on both sides, that time was long overdue for gathering both Serbs and Albanians for political dialogue. The first seminar was planned in Vrnjačka Banja in March 2002. The same process as in Kosovo and Macedonia was observed, and while the participants showed quite some reluctance and defensiveness in the beginning, the experience of the dialogue space and the opportunities it gave to discuss meaningful political issues in a safe and supportive setting changed their attitude toward the dialogue itself.

The dialogue facilitators had gained authority through their long experience in Kosovo. The foreign presence gave the process a sense of importance and seriousness, as well as giving the participants the feeling that somebody out there cared about their situation and wanted to assist and stimulate the process of dialogue between the conflicting groups. The hardest job in these initial seminars is always to identify and to recruit the right participants. The recruitment process is tough, and direct contact must be kept with the participants every day to counter potential cancellation arguments.³¹

Dan Smith would use his knowledge of conflicts in general and widen the horizons of participants, to help them see that their conflict was not so unique, but shared certain patterns with similar conflicts around the world. He would also focus on the warning signs, which could escalate a conflict to a violent level. I (Steinar Bryn) would focus more on the critique of ethnic thinking as the basis for political action, and would present alternative models for understanding identity. I would then stimulate the participants through dialogue to identify their common interest in joining forces to solve the problems. Underlying the Nansen Dialogue is the understanding that respect for democratic principles and human rights must inform political strategies rather than ethnic affiliations.

The techniques utilized by both Smith and myself were by now tested and refined on previous groups. It was important to provide plenty of time for the participants to identify the variety of problems they were facing, to discuss their causes and how they could be solved. Through

this process of widening the horizons, looking at their situation from a larger European perspective, making them see their own conflict as related to similar conflicts between majority and minority, the participants moved from individualizing the problems to seeing them as part of larger structural patterns. The conflict was not as much caused by ethnic hatred, as the lack of finding proper ways for both groups to influence the future development of their own society, a future they somehow will have to share whether they like it or not.

A serious effort was made by the Nansen Coordinators to stay in touch with these participants between the seminars. This stems from the strong emphasis within the Nansen Dialogue on follow up. The follow-up work is often the most important part of any seminar. Even to travel to the region just to have some meetings in cafés, make oneself visible and available, is a good way to build confidence and trust. Some of the most meaningful visits were spent in this way.

The strength of our approach was that it moved the participants from looking at each other as the main problem, to seeing how the combination of underdeveloped infrastructure, high level of unemployment, local corruption, ethnic stereotypes and no clear minority politics created an extremely vulnerable situation, particularly when the neighboring regions, Kosovo and Macedonia, were full of similar tensions and outbreaks of violence. This reduced the strong blaming of the other, and opened the space for human interaction.

The question of Serbia's minority politics became an important issue. NDC Serbia had experience with similar seminars in Vojvodina and Sandžak with their significant proportions of Hungarian and Bosniak/Muslim populations. Subotica in Vojvodina had segregated schools, somewhat similar to Bujanovac. When experiences from these three regions are brought together it provides an opportunity for the participants to share experiences, both on what is problematic and what can be done about it (creative solutions). It provides the opportunity to discuss what might be structural problems, partly because they are similar in all three regions, and what might be more anchored in stereotypes, attitudes and behavior of individuals, but supported by home education, school education and indirectly also by the media.

When the issue of structural problems is addressed, it is very hard, almost impossible to avoid dealing with the national politics of the state of Serbia. Why are their future plans of infrastructure support geographically biased? Why do they keep talking about Serbia as a multi-ethnic state when the level of segregation is so high? How will

the new election laws affect minority voting, and what is the rationale behind these laws? And so on.

Interestingly enough, in 2003 both sides seemed to agree that to comply with European standards regarding minorities and to move toward a deeper integration with Europe seemed to be the only road that could provide the economic reconstruction necessary in the region. I deliberately joked about the possibility of a new political party across the ethnic divide, but Serbs and Albanians were united on this particular issue. Furthermore a certain unity was also obvious with respect to dissatisfaction with how Belgrade was dealing with the larger European issues, as well as how they were dealing with the more regional South Serbian issue. Seen from the south serbian point of view, Belgrade politics seemed unable to respond to the larger international challenges as well as the more local Serbian challenges. Belgrade politics seemed trapped in its own closed rhetoric and political power games.

Community-Based Peace Building

Dialogue—more than words. A wish to see how Norway dealt with some of these problems was clearly expressed by many of the participants in the Bujanovac seminars and a trip to Norway was carried out in the summer of 2003. Visits to schools, media institutions, meetings with local politicians from municipalities of different size, even an encounter with the Norwegian author Jostein Gaarder, was part of the program. But the underlying goal was of course that the Serbian and Albanian delegations that were to visit Norway would do so together, with plenty of space to continue their own political dialogue in a safer, and for them, more free environment. The main purpose of the visit was not to learn from “Norwegian ways” but for this inter-ethnic group to explore Norway together. Bujanovac and Preševo are small municipalities. Most people know each other. Most people know who did what during the violent uprising in 2000. It is difficult to hide behind lies and evasions. This visit was a breakthrough in the local reconciliation work. To sit on the white benches outside the Nansen Academy at midnight provided space for conversations that would have been almost impossible in Bujanovac. A new level of honesty was reached.

Furthermore, local contacts were made in Lillehammer Municipality, that triggered a return visit by politicians from Lillehammer Municipality to Bujanovac in October same year. The Mayor of Lillehammer, the Deputy Mayor of Oppland County, the Deputy Chief of Adminis-

tration and 4 other delegates developed personal relations with local Bujanovac politicians during this visit. Lillehammer Municipality visited Bujanovac again one year later and interviewed around 50 people in the administration. Based on these interviews, Lillehammer came with 64 different recommendations to Bujanovac.

The assumption was that Serbia, in addition to spending too much material and human resources in being preoccupied with conflicts and wars, had also lost 20 years of normal municipal development. A country like Norway had, under more peaceful circumstances, developed efficient municipal administrations. Through discussions with the Bujanovac mayor and the local administration, Lillehammer and Bujanovac agreed to focus on five areas: business development, further development of the local service center, training of the head of departments, strengthening of local politicians and the development of a city manager position. In addition, a separate school project was developed.

While Lillehammer obviously had a reconciliatory effect, they learned fast that “politics” could still get in the way of modernizing the local municipal administration. There are no quick fix solutions. The ethnic tension is still strong in south Serbia and northwest Macedonia, and a strategy on how to deal with this tension must be an integrated component in all municipal development strategies.

The Nansen approach stresses the need to work on different levels in the community. Dialogue work among students and youth was followed by a unique theater performance. They identified 20 scenes from everyday life, among them corruption in schools and in the health care center, inefficiency in the post office and a remarkable scene when an Albanian boy is taking a Serb girlfriend home to his family. The actors were amateurs, but performing for a mixed audience of 700. This was the largest multiethnic event in Bujanovac, probably ever.³²

Another group of youth and students traveled to the Acropolis to experience the reconciliatory effect of their common cultural heritage just south of the border. These groups of youth are together challenging the divided structures of Bujanovac and are currently working on an integrated youth centre.

Kosovo

The community based peace building approach in Kosovo focused on two municipalities where Norwegian KFOR had been present: Kosovo Polje and Obiliq. Kosovo Polje is a municipality only five kilometers

from Priština. The villages Lismir/Dubri Dub and Nakarade were abandoned by the Serb community as a consequence of the conflict, and their houses were burned down. The houses were rebuilt by UNDP, European Perspective and the Kosovar government financed the project. The Kosovan Nansen Dialogue was responsible for the dialogue between the returning Serb community and the receiving Albanian community. During the first meeting in 2005, return was not discussed. It was their first meeting in 6 years and a lot of curiosity about everyday life issues. Is your cow still alive? What has happened to my field? How are your kids doing?

On the second meeting the issue of return was opened up, and the questions and worries discussed. One Albanian in Nakarade had lost 17 of his male family members. In the first seminar he did not participate, but he was convinced to participate in the second seminar. How can one deal with such a destiny and welcome the Serbs back to the village? Through focusing on the good memories from his youth with some from the Serbian group who planned to return he managed to overcome his initial fear and started to be a positive force in the group.

Dialogue is a slow process, as is reconciliation. But UNDP decided to go ahead with 34 houses, and on 12 December 2007 all houses in Dubri Dub had a family member returning. These are delicate issues. One criterion for coming on the list for houses was economic need. But those with economic need are also more likely to sell their houses. Unless more return is stimulated to the same area, the chances the Serbs will remain are small. But we hope to start a return process to a third village in the same manner, in cooperation with Kosovo Polje municipality and UNDP. Dialogue is more than words.

Majority/Minority vs. ethnic conflict

Serbs in Kosovo most often refer to history during the periods when they believed Albanians had the upper hand; 1940–45, 1974–89, and 1999–now. During these periods the Albanians were the majority in the Kosovo territory. The Albanians on the other hand refer to history when Serbs have had the upper hand, the historical periods Kosovo has been defined as a part of Serbia; 1918–1940, 1945–74 and 1989–99. During these periods Serbs defined themselves as a majority in Serbia and the Albanians as a minority. This does not mean that the periods are compatible and the suffering is equal on both sides; it just lends support to

my interpretation of this as a majority/minority conflict (although disguised in national symbols and so-called ethnic hatred).

A similar situation is perceived in South Serbia. When politics becomes ethnicized, as in Kosovo and Serbia, one might respond that it is the same thing. Ethnic politicians fight for power over the territory. Ethnic politicians fight to define the borders of the territory in such a way that they get the (ethnic) majority and thereby the power. This illustrates the problem with liberal democracy. When politics become ethnicized, the ethnic majority perceives itself and is perceived by the minority as having all the power. In spite of the democracy's theoretical attempt to include the protection of minorities, the only weapon the minority seems to have is the refusal to cooperate with the majority and not to recognize the institutions controlled by the latter.

Still, I will argue that it is possible to de-ethnicize politics through the professionalization of the political administration, delegation of power and through stimulating civic responsibility among the citizens and to develop bipartisan thinking among the politicians. These are central elements in the Lillehammer-Bujanovac cooperation.

Conclusion

In Serbia, dialogue and reconciliation are a prerequisite for democratic development. The tolerance needed for opposing political views must be developed. Continuous ethnic conflict will stop any wish to develop a democratic multiethnic state. To what extent dialogue can foster democratic changes is an issue yet to be explored.³³ But Serbia cannot continue to segregate at home, if it wants to integrate abroad. The Serbian government cannot continue to segregate and at the same time claim to be governing a multiethnic state.

A main challenge for the Serbs is to realize that the development of Serbia into a civil state does not have to threaten the Serbian nation. But it means the separation of state and nation, and the breakdown of ethnic politics. This challenge is similar to the Danes, the Austrians, and the Norwegians are facing as well—how to develop a state where all the citizens have equal access to resources and opportunities independent of their ethnic affiliation.

The situation in Kosovo might call for stronger measures. The experience from the dialogue seminars in Kosovo is that the future status of Kosovo is not the only problem; the relationship between Serbs and Albanians is an equally serious problem in itself. As long as

dialogue and reconciliation are not given a higher priority the exclusive narratives will continue on both sides, and the transfer of the conflict to the next generation will most likely continue to go on, in the homes and in the schools, and certain politicians will continue to exploit this to gain power, status and profit. The good news is that to give dialogue and reconciliation a much higher priority is a decision the main actors in international peace building have the power and the ability to make. It is a question of political priority and not lack of will on the ground.³⁴

The Serbs and the Albanians continue to live in separate realities in Kosovo. The Albanians now live in an independent Kosovo according to the declaration made by the Kosovar parliament on 17 February 2008 and the Serbs live in a Kosovo that according to the UN resolution 1244 is a part of Serbia.³⁵

While working in a political climate of far more powerful events (the brutal war in 1999, the March riots in 2004 and the declaration of independence on 17 February 2008) than dialogue seminars, it is almost impossible to evaluate the effect of the Nansen Dialogue in the area. The relationship between Serbs and Albanians has hardly ever been worse. Probably the most important effect of the Nansen Dialogue is that a symbol of integration, openness, tolerance, non-violent communication and a more inclusive way of thinking has been present these last 10 years and has coexisted with nationalistic propaganda and the building of hatred on both sides. Nansen is well known in Mitrovica and Kosovo Polje. In Kosovo Polje, one of our projects was to build a Fridtjof Nansen street so nice, that it would keep the multi-ethnic neighborhood intact. As a Serbian leader told me after a bomb was thrown into Café Dolce Vita just on the north side of the Mitrovica Bridge in April 2006, he went out on the bridge and turned around to talk to the people who already had decided to cross in order to punish the guilty. He managed to convince them to go back and added to me "Before my participation in Nansen, I did not even think about that as an option."

Notes

- ¹ Inge Eidsvåg. Quoted from an information brochure about Nansen Dialogue 2005. Nansen Academy. Lillehammer.
- ² We have mainly been an operative organization with too little time to write about what we do. Vemund Aarbrekke, Facilitating Dialogue in Former Yugoslavia, (Oslo, PRIO report 2/2002) writes about the development of the Nansen Network, Steinar Bryn, "Fra en dialogarbeiders dagbok" in Heidrun Sørli Røhr (ed.), *Dialog mer enn ord* (Lillehammer, Norway, Nansenskolen, 2005), pp. 9–33 writes about basic elements of Nansen Dialogue.
- ³ When Hanne Sofie Greve, during a seminar talked about the investigations she was leading about the Serb atrocities made in Prijedor, Bosnia-Herzegovina, in May 1992, it was obvious from the reactions that the Serbian participants were not aware of this. Accounts from Croatian aggression in Prozor, Stolaz and Chaplina shocked others. A Serb told how his house was burned down by other Serbs in Vukovar. Paolo Rumiz gives an alternative interpretation. The conflict in Vukovar was as much between newcomers and oldtimers as between Serbs and Croats etc. See P. Rumiz, *Masken für ein Massaker. Der manipulierte Krieg: Spurensuche auf dem Balkan*, expanded German ed., trans. from Italian by Friederike Hausmann and Gesa Schröder (Munich: Verlag Antje Kunstmann, 2000).
- ⁴ I do believe that this compact environment played an important part. I am not sure it could have worked in the same way in a larger city with all its urban attractions.
- ⁵ Harold Saunders, *A Public Peace Process: Sustained Dialogue to Transform Racial and Ethnic Conflicts* (New York: Palgrave, 1999), p. 22.
- ⁶ Dan Smith, "Trends and Causes of Armed Conflict" in *Berghof Handbook for Conflict Transformation* (Berghof, 2004), at www.berghof-handbook.net.
- ⁷ Dan Smith, "Getting dialogue flowing; The surprising uses to which academic methodology may be put" in Heidrun Sørli Røhr, *Dialog—mer enn ord* (Nansenskolen, Lillehammer, 2005), pp. 53–54.
- ⁸ Fredrik Barth (ed.), *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries* (Long Grove, Ill.: Waveland Press, 1969).
- ⁹ Svein Mønnesland, *Før Jugoslavia, og etter*, 2nd ed. (Oslo: Syppress Forlag, 1994), p. 338.
- ¹⁰ A dialogue worker in the Nansen Dialogue Center, Sarajevo, has an Albanian father and a Muslim mother. She married a man with Croat and Serb parents. They have two children. What are they?
- ¹¹ Nebosja Savija-Valha, "Ethnicities in Bosnia Herzegovina: Mission Impossible," in Røhr (ed.), *Dialog*, pp.115–132
- ¹² Erik Cleven "Between Faces and Stories" in Sørli, *Dialog*, pp. 35–49.

- ¹³ Vemund Aarbrekke, *Facilitating Dialogue in Former Yugoslavia* (Oslo, PRIO report 2/2002), pp. 37–47.
- ¹⁴ One should be highly suspicious of any number coming out of Kosovo, including mine. This is still my educated guess. In the period from November 1997 until the bombing started in March 1999 some 2000+, (around 1/3 of these Serbs and around 2/3 of these Albanians). This is of course a tragic number, but relatively lower than the number of people killed in B&H during the summer of 1992.
- ¹⁵ Smith, “Getting dialogue flowing,” pp. 53–54.
- ¹⁶ There is an effort by NRK to do a follow up 10 years after. How did the seminar affect the participants and how do they look at it ten years later? For 2 of the Albanian participants it started ten years of inter-ethnic work in Pristina, and they have been heavily involved in return work.
- ¹⁷ Abdullah Ferizi, “The art of creating a multiethnic dialogue-team in Kosovo” in Røhr (ed.), *Dialog*, pp. 111–114.
- ¹⁸ Based on these seminars alone, the war in 1999 dramatically increased the gap between Serbs and Albanians in Kosovo.
- ¹⁹ Laura Silber and Allan Little, *The Death of Yugoslavia* (London: BBC Books and Penguin Books, 1995), pp. 390–91.
- ²⁰ Sabrina P. Ramet, *Balkan Babel: The disintegration of Yugoslavia from the death of Tito to the fall of Milošević*, 4th ed. (Boulder, CO.: Westview Press, 2002), p. 174.
- ²¹ Helena Zdravković, “Historical Victimage of Kosovo Serbs and Albanians,” in *Balkanica*, Vol. XXXVI, pp. 83–112.
- ²² Julie Mertus, *Kosovo: how myths and truths started a war* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1999), p. 19
- ²³ I recently facilitated a seminar between Palestinians and Israelis where the Palestinians initially were very reluctant to participate. To dialogue was a way of recognizing the “Other” that was unacceptable. When dialogue was introduced as making one’s own situation more visible and understandable for the other, they accepted.
- ²⁴ Mertus, *Kosovo: how myths and truths*, p. 4
- ²⁵ One might ask if all the negotiations between Serbs and Albanians could have been more successful if they had added a dialogue component?
- ²⁶ “Research shows estimates of Bosnian war death toll were inflated,” in *International Herald Tribune* (21 June 2007), at www.ihf.com.
- ²⁷ The concept used literally for the political group that was controlling the bridge in Mitrovica. I am using it here in a broader sense, including those who keep track of those who cooperate with the other side.
- ²⁸ Mertus, *Kosovo: how myths and truths*. Reference is to the whole book.
- ²⁹ The four villages are Zilce, Ratae, Semshevo and Preljubiste. 12 Albanian and 12 Macedonian children started school on 1 September in what can be consider a historic breakthrough in Macedonia.
- ³⁰ INFORMATION on the security situation in the communes Bujanovac, Presevo and Medvedja, with the proposals of measures for the solution of

the crisis [Covic Plan/The Coordination Body of the Federal and the Republican Governments] 6 February 2001.

- ³¹ The image among certain observers was that anybody will dialogue as long as Norway will pay the coffee, a comment even heard from Norwegian diplomats, is far from the truth. Recruitment is in my experience the most difficult part of a dialogue seminar. You can always recruit the seminar mafia as long as Norway pay the coffee, but that was never our target group.
- ³² The same kind of performance was organized by the Nansen Dialogue Center, Banja Luka, with youth from Prijedor, Sanski Most and Koserac.
- ³³ Rolf Borgos, is currently writing his master's thesis on a comparison of two municipalities in South Serbia, one with extensive dialogue experience, Bujanovac—the other Medeva, without the similar dialogue experience. University of Bergen. IDEA (2007) is similarly concerned about the relation between dialogue work and democratic development.
- ³⁴ More than 450 Serbs and Albanians from Kosovo and South Serbia have been in dialogue seminars in Lillehammer, more than 1000 have been participating in dialogue related events in Kosovo and South Serbia. During the fall of 2009 I facilitated dialogue for return to the mixed village of Gorni Dubrevo/Miradi and "unofficial" dialogue seminars for Serbs and Albanians from Kosovo. In May 2009 we organized a seminar for International Commission on Missing Persons, family associations in Kosovo still searching for their missing family members.
- ³⁵ Could this be explored further, with less focus on territory and more focus on people, maybe the Albanians can get their independence granted by the Security Council and the Serbs can remain citizens of Serbia? Of course it poses some practical problems, but so do present day reality.

The Power of Values (A Conclusion)

Sabrina P. Ramet¹

Those of us who have contributed to this volume share the conviction that values matter for political behavior. Values are those goods or goals that we consider important, that we strive to realize or preserve, that we believe should guide policy, and a value orientation always involves giving higher priority to some values and lower priority to others. For example, when a group believes that the value of “preserving” Serbian jurisdiction over Kosovo has a high priority but that promoting gender equality and social tolerance has a low priority, that group will press for certain policies, rather than others. We share also a second conviction, which is that, within any society, one can expect to find some diversity of value orientations. In every society and, for that matter, in most if not all religious bodies, one can find persons who are more conservative and others who are more liberal, and often extremists on both the right and the left. That said, politics is, as John Easton wrote more than 30 years ago, a struggle over values. In Serbia today, as the chapters for this volume show, there are liberals and nationalist-conservatives, advocates of the rule of law and beneficiaries of corruption, modernists and traditionalists, those who are engaged in the struggle over values and, for that matter, those who are not.²

Values are created, promoted, and reinforced or, alternatively, subverted, mocked, and destroyed by any of a number of agents and mediums. Family and church come immediately to mind and certainly, in Serbia, the Orthodox Church has been a powerful agent for the promotion of conservative and traditionalist agenda, as Klaus Buchenau shows in his chapter for this volume. Within the Church, however, there are both anti-Westerners and moderates but, as Buchenau notes, these terms refer “to local mentalities and personal networks, but not necessarily [to] stable value orientations.” But political leaders also bear a heavy responsibility insofar as they can shape public perceptions,

expectations, and opinion through their rhetoric, their policies, and their actions. Ivan Čolović's chapter, which discusses then-Prime Minister Koštunica's highly visible and symbolic visit to Hilandar monastery, brings home how the actions of politicians may promote certain values, while Hilde Haug's chapter on the place of Kosovo in Serbian politics looks at the role played by Koštunica's political rhetoric in the continued discussion about that lost province.

But values are formed and shaped by other agents as well, including the print media, cinema and television, fiction, and schools, with textbooks playing a critical role in shaping young persons' understanding of their nation's history, their own rights and duties both as citizens of their nation and as citizens of the world, and, of course, those values which most deserve to be defended. The chapters by Izabela Kisić and Slavija Stanojlović, Andrew Horton, and Dubravka Stojanović analyse the roles played by these distinct agents. In her chapter on textbooks, for instance, Stojanović concludes that the Serbian textbooks she analysed specifically promote a "non-civic value system" and notes that what is excluded from history textbooks is often as important as what is included. Inevitably, values are expressed and reinforced in language itself, and choice of specific vocabulary can buttress specific political positions. As Maciej Czerwiński shows in his chapter for this volume, there are both less aggressive and more aggressive ways of asserting Serbia's continued claim to jurisdiction over Kosovo. Among the less aggressive ways are descriptions of that country as a "Southern Serbian Province" or as "the heart of Serbia," while the expressions "fake state" and "phantom state" may be counted as somewhat more aggressive in tone. Either way, the message is conveyed that Kosovo is a vital part of Serbia and that a good Serbian patriot must, apparently, continue to protest against Kosovo's independence.

Values may also be sown and sustained by myths and, more so, by the specific interpretations given to the nation's myths. As I endeavored to show in my chapter on dead kings, the choice of the myth of Prince Lazar, sometimes styled as "tsar," to serve as Serbia's central national myth has allowed more nationalistic politicians to point to the theme of the martyrdom of Lazar and interpret that as a metaphor for the alleged martyrdom of the Serbian nation. It is also a myth which sacralizes Serbia as a "heavenly kingdom," offering its politicians a rather vague, ill-defined authorization to carry out unspecified tasks.

And, as the history of that myth makes clear, myths may be given dramatically different interpretations at different points in history.

But values may also be shaped by external agents, such as the European Union—the subject of Stefano Bianchini’s chapter for this volume. As he shows, EU values are the product of a series of documents, from the founding treaties to the criteria adopted in Copenhagen, and are described in the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, approved in Nice in 2000 and later formalized in the EU’s constitutional treaty of 2004. But, as he further suggests, in spite of a strong interest on the part of a sector of the Serbian political establishment in joining the EU and in spite of EU conditionality, Belgrade’s orientation toward the EU both as an association of states and as a community of values has been confused and inconsistent, reflecting not only the polarization of Serbian politics but also the confused and corrupt post-socialist transition, a subject also discussed in the introduction to this volume. Among the problems with corruption one may mention that corruption erodes civic values by propagating the notion that the most effective way to obtain property, goods, and services, and for that matter power itself, is to operate outside the rules. This, in turn, underlies the low trust in the judiciary reported by Bianchini, with only 9% of Serbs expressing trust in the Serbian judicial system in 2006.

So, where does Serbia stand today in regard to the struggle between advocates of civic values such as tolerance, equality, and individual rights and duties, and Partisans of uncivic values such as ethnic, religious, and sexual intolerance, inequality, and the notion that collective rights should trump individual rights? The chapters by Ola Listhaug, Kristen Ringdal, and Albert Simkus, by Dragana Dulić, and by Nebojša Petrović represent endeavors to answer this question. Listhaug, Ringdal, and Simkus present data which suggest that Serbs are: well below the European average in terms of trust in people or political institutions (with trust considered an important civic value); tend to prefer a strong leader over a weak leader by a small margin; rank at the median in terms of whether democracy is a good system or not; and rank roughly in the same category with Norway, Sweden, and Switzerland in generally preferring that political extreme parties be banned. They conclude that Serbia is not an “outlier” in terms of civic vs. uncivic values but, on the contrary, ranks as typical of European countries in several dimensions.

Dulić is less sanguine, however, and finds that the Serbian state has been built on “extremely anti-modern ideological foundations” with a

“long-standing authoritarian, paternalist tradition,” with the result that the country has repeatedly encountered roadblocks in the effort to embrace political liberalism, constitutionalism, and parliamentarism. Not yet ripe for admission to the EU, Dulić concludes that “Serbia remains stuck in a 19th-century world of nationalism,” refusing “to recognize the new global realities of economic interdependence, interstate reciprocity, solidarist cosmopolitanism—all of which characterize today’s EU.”

Petrović’s chapter largely echoes the caution expressed by Dulić, noting that, during the war of 1991–95, criminals and political extremists rose to prominence and became wealthy and influential, portraying themselves as heroes. In so doing, they poisoned the atmosphere in Serbian society and left a bad legacy for the post-war period. His data highlight the dramatic polarization of Serbian society, with young supporters of the Serbian Radical Party giving priority to the preservation of Serbian traditions, strengthening the military, and preserving the territorial integrity of the country, while young supporters of more moderate parties tend to give high priority to improving interethnic relations, strengthening guarantees of minority rights, improving democracy, and gaining admission to the EU. Petrović’s chapter thus confirms, at the social level, the polarization which Buchenau identified within the Serbian Orthodox Church. If the war has poisoned the social atmosphere—figuring, in its own way, as a socializing agent—then the key to making progress in building liberal democracy lies in coming to terms with the recent past, as Daša Duhaček argues in her chapter. Among those who began the struggle already during the Milošević era, she notes, was the dissident group, Women in Black that rejected nationalism and war, as well as the regime’s efforts to promote patriarchal values.

Finally, Steinar Bryn’s chapter offers a vision of hope. Focusing on the work of the institution of Nansen Dialogue, based in Lillehammer, Norway, he shows how years of work in bringing together Serbs and Albanians from Kosovo have contributed to breaking down social barriers between the two groups and to fostering interpersonal trust that crosses the ethnic divide. Summing up the work of Nansen Dialogue, Bryn concludes that perhaps “the most important effect of Nansen Dialogue is that a symbol of integration, openness, tolerance, non-violent communication and a more inclusive way of thinking has been present these last 10 years,” thus offering an alternative to the nationalist view of relations.

After the dark years associated with Koštunica's years in the prime minister's office, March 2004–July 2008, there is a sense of optimism in some circles about the prospects for Serbia's eventually joining the EU. In this connection, the EU has put pressure on Serbia to fight against crime and corruption in the country, to which the current government of Mirko Cvetković and Ivica Dačić has responded in a responsible way. But Milošević as sorcerer and Borisav Jović as his apprentice, as well as others whether named in the chapters included herein or not, called into being forces which cannot be easily tamed. To give a recent example: on 31 May 2009, the influential daily newspaper, *Večernje novosti*, devoted two pages to attacking three champions of human rights: Sonja Biserko, director of the Serbian Helsinki Committee for Human Rights; Nataša Kandić, director of the Humanitarian Law Center; and Biljana Kovačević-Vučo of the Lawyers' Committee for Human Rights. "The article claimed that the three women were aiming to destroy the Serbian state...[and] receiving money from dubious foreign sources." Their main offense, according to the article, was to demand that persons indicted for war crimes (meaning, in the first place, Ratko Mladić) be held accountable for their crimes.³ Biserko, Kandić, and Kovačević-Vučo had all been defamed previously—whether in the Serbian press or in the context of a book—and Biserko and Kandić have also been subjected to verbal harassment and intimidation. More recently, an effort to hold a Gay Pride Parade in Belgrade came to nothing. Originally scheduled for 23 September 2009, with security guaranteed by the Serbian government, the event was canceled when right-wing groups and religious extremists threatened to use violence to break up the parade.

Dragana Dulić is certainly right in her assessment that Serbia remains, in some ways, stuck in the past or, to put it differently, moving on a slower trajectory than most other European states. Here it is important to emphasize that the most recent past has the greatest impact on the thinking of the present generation of Serbs since, in general, people draw lessons, if at all, from the events they witness or experience in their own lives, and secondarily from the *interpretations* of the more distant past to which they are exposed in the present. The Milošević years had dysfunctional psychological, economic, and political impacts on Serbs,⁴ and, after the assassination of Zoran Djindjić in March 2003 and the installation of Vojislav Koštunica as prime minister in March 2004, dysfunctional politics resumed—at least until July 2008—a point made by Duhaček in this volume.⁵ As Timothy Edmunds has

noted, “[i]n Serbia since 2000, electoral politics has become solidly established. Liberalism has not. Reformist elements have had to work within—and often struggle against—a political space shaped by the illiberal practices of the past.”⁶ Whether Serbia can succeed in building a truly *liberal* democracy will depend on how successful it is in fostering civic values, and that, in turn, will depend on the future behavior of the press, the future contents of school textbooks, and the future pronouncements of clergy, politicians, and other persons with influence—or, in a word, on the firm and stable commitment of the ruling establishment to building a civic culture and promoting the rule of law in Serbia.

Notes

- ¹ I am grateful to Dragana Dulić for her comments on an earlier draft. Needless to say, I am solely responsible for the interpretations offered in this chapter.
- ² Dragana Dulić makes this point eloquently in her article, “Etno-nacionalizam i konstituisanje države,” in *Godišnjak Fakulteta bezbednosti* (Belgrade), 2008, pp. 9–40.
- ³ “Serbia: Human Rights Defenders at Risk,” *Amnesty International* (14 September 2009), at [http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/RWFiles2009.nsf/FilesByRWDocUnidFilename/SKEA-7VVHJT-full_report.pdf/\\$File/full_report.pdf](http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/RWFiles2009.nsf/FilesByRWDocUnidFilename/SKEA-7VVHJT-full_report.pdf/$File/full_report.pdf) [last accessed on 14 November 2009], p. 1.
- ⁴ See Vjeran Pavlaković, “Serbia Transformed? Political Dynamics in the Milošević Era and After”; Sabrina P. Ramet, “Under the Holy Lime Tree: The Inculcation of Neurotic and Psychotic Syndromes as a Serbian Wartime Strategy, 1986–1995”; James Gow and Milena Michalski, “The Impact of the War on Serbia: Spoiled Appetites and Progressive Decay”; and Maja Miljković and Marko Attila Hoare, “Crime and the Economy under Milošević and His Successors”—all in Sabrina P. Ramet and Vjeran Pavlaković (eds.), *Serbia since 1989: Politics and Society under Milošević and After* (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 2005).
- ⁵ Concerning corruption in the Koštunica era, see Vesna Pešić, *State Capture and Widespread Corruption in Serbia*, CEPS Working Document No. 262 (Brussels: Centre for European Policy Studies, March 2007), available at <http://www.ceps.be/files/book/1478.pdf> [last accessed on 25 January 2010].
- ⁶ Timothy Edmunds, “Illiberal Resilience in Serbia,” in *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 20, No. 1 (January 2009), p. 139.

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Dragana Dulić is a professor of ethics and social and human sciences at the Faculty of Security, University of Belgrade, editor of the journal *Ljudska bezbednost/Human Security*, and member of the Legal Council of the President of Serbia. She served as president of the Hegel Society of Serbia, 1992–1994. She is the author of 8 books, among them: *Uvod u filozofiju i etiku* (Fakultet odbrane i zaštite, 1993), *Uvod u filozofiju* (Zavod za udžbenike i nastavna sredstva, 1995), *Etički problemi upravljanja ljudskom resursima* (Filip Višnjić, 2005), *Etika i politika humanarne pomoći* (Filip Višnjić, 2007), and *Mirovne i humanitarne operacije* (Službeni glasnik, 2008). She is also co-author (with Branko Romčević) of *Etika* (Belgrade, 2002). She has also edited or co-edited several books, among them: *Human Security in Serbia—National Report—2004–2006* (Fund for Open Society, 2005, 2007).

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Steinar Bryn is a professor at the Nansen Academy in Lillehammer, Norway, and founder and director of the Nansen Dialogue Network, which consists of ten Nansen Dialogue Centers. Since 1996 he has worked continuously to give Serbs and Albanians the opportunity to engage in dialogue. He is the author of *Norske Amerika-bilete: om amerikanisering av norsk kultur* (Det Norske Samlaget, 1992) and co-author (with Rolf Lunden and Erik Åsard) of *Networks of Americanization: Aspects of the American Influence in Sweden* (Almqvist & Wiksell International, 1992). He contributed a chapter to *Kazaaam! Splat! Ploof! The American Impact on European Popular Culture since 1945*, co-edited by Sabrina P. Ramet and Gordana Crnković (Rowman & Littlefield, 2003). In 2004, he was awarded the Bridge-BUILDER Prize by the Norske Kirkeakademier (Norwegian Church Academies) for his work with dialogue in ex/Yugoslavia. He has, over the years, facilitated over 50 seminars with Serbs and Albanians from Kosovo and South Serbia.

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Citizenship in Eastern Europe (Ashgate, 2006), “Ethics and/in Politics: Towards Citizenship as Responsibility to the Other,” in Eva Skaerbaek et al. *Common Passion, Different Voices: Reflections on Citizenship and Intersubjectivity* (Raw Nerve Limited, 2006), and “Is the Category of Gender an American Export Item: The Case of Serbia” in Ljubinka Trgovčević (ed.), *125 Years of Diplomatic Relations between USA and Serbia*, (Faculty of Political Sciences, University of Belgrade, 2008), as well as other books. She is a member of the editorial board of the *International Feminist Journal of Politics* and member of the International Advisory Board of *Signs*. She is currently directing two research projects, “Comprehensive analysis of gender dimension in educational material at the University of Belgrade,” supported by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), and “Politics of Gender Equality in Education in Serbia,” supported by the Ministry of Education in Serbia. She received her Ph.D. in Political Science from Rutgers University.

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Are the value systems of the post-Milošević era true stumbling blocks of the delayed transition of Serbia? And to what extent may one find civic values supportive of democratic transition in the country? Contributors from Norway, Serbia, Italy, Germany, Poland and the United States cover a broad range of topics in order to provide answers to these questions. The subjects of investigation are national myths and symbols, history textbooks, media, film, religion, inter-ethnic dialogue, transitional justice, political party agendas and other related themes.

The authors of the essays represent different scholarly disciplines whose theoretical conceptions and frameworks are employed in order to analyze two alternative value systems in Serbia: liberal, cosmopolitan and civic on the one hand, and traditional, provincial, and nationalist on the other.

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